

More psychology and the Christian life.

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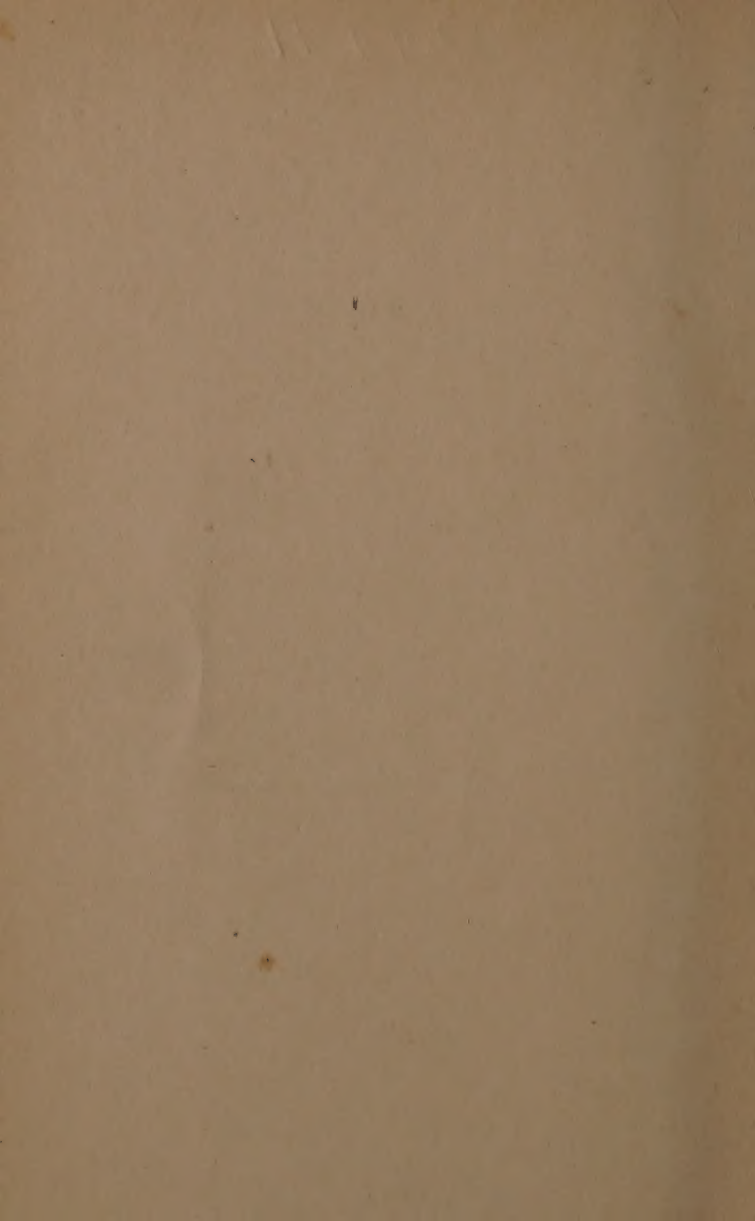
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**MORE PSYCHOLOGY
AND THE
CHRISTIAN LIFE**

T. W. PYM
D.S.O., M.A.

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AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE
CHRISTIAN LIFE

SEVENTH EDITION

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MORE PSYCHOLOGY AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

BY

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More Psychology and the Christian Life

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TO MY MOTHER

PREFACE

THIS book assumes in the reader very little previous study of psychology in its application to religion. In my own mind it is a natural successor to "Psychology and the Christian Life," written three years ago, but it can be understood without reference to the first book by those who need an elementary introduction to the subject. Its aim is practical, and my hope is that it may help people in the difficult art of daily life.

The expression of that hope and sometimes the tone of the book itself may seem to imply that the writer has found the secret of efficiency in conduct and of nobility in character; that to himself at least there are no difficulties. The inference might be fair but it would be mistaken; much that is here written springs from a personal realization of the extraordinary difficulties of a sincere and loyal discipleship to Jesus Christ, and some of the criticisms levelled in these pages at professing Christians find their mark in myself.

I entertain a second hope which may be as presumptuous as the first: it is that the book may read less jerkily than it has been written. Except on holidays it has been put on paper in odd periods

of time, seldom free from interruption for more than half-an-hour. The ideas contained in it have been thought out over a period of some years, and that alone has made it possible to write them down in the intervals of a working-life that has been otherwise sufficiently occupied.

Among the criticisms made of the book may be the objection from the Christian standpoint that it does not sufficiently stress the guilt of sin. The truth is that those whose consciences retain any sensitiveness at all will find in it material to increase that sensitiveness; for others it is not primarily intended. My object has been to try and help those who feel that life might be lived more adequately by themselves or that they need to equip themselves better for helping others so to live. Sin is hell, and sin is death. For that very reason, it is neither the first nor the last nor the most important consideration in the relationship of the individual to his God.

A list of books recommended for further reading will be found on page 175. My grateful acknowledgments are due to Miss P. M. Lowe for valuable help in preparing this book for the press.

T. W. PYM.

*Cambridge House,
January 1925.*

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CHAPTER I

IMAGINATION

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PSYCHOLOGY, the science of mind, of behaviour, and so of human nature, is, in its practical application to daily life, the science of efficiency. Practical psychology applied to the art of advertising, to factory conditions, to education, produces an increase of efficiency in those spheres of human activity. Applied to crime it would (and doubtless does) produce men and women better equipped than they would otherwise be for following their profession. If, as I believe, a scientific study of human nature would make a detective better at detecting there is every reason equally to suppose that by its aid an impostor will more successfully impose.

For psychology, like any science, has no moral complexion, and a common prejudice that exists against it on the ground of its alleged non-morality or even immorality is illogical and unfair. Chemistry as a science is not on a plane where words such as "moral" or "immoral" have any meaning; they simply do not apply. So too with psychology. But that the chemist may harness his discoveries to good or bad ends is perfectly true; again, those who employ him may use his researches to promote the welfare of mankind at large, or to blot out a

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whole countryside with poison-gas. To enquire and, if possible, to discover is one of man's driving instincts and most precious rights; morally it is colourless. The use to which he puts his discoveries marks him as good, bad or indifferent, but with chemistry as a science or study there is no fault that can reasonably be found.

The suspicion that lurks in some quarters about psychology as a study, particularly about what is called the new psychology, is due to two features which distinguish this study from other scientific pursuits. In the first place its theories or discoveries can be more easily and therefore are more frequently applied in everyday life by ordinary people than are discoveries in other realms. If I read in a magazine a popular article on how to erect a home-made wireless set I may not even be interested if that kind of thing does not appeal to me. Even if my interest is awakened I've got to go out shopping, and then follow out careful instructions further explained by an engineering friend, before I can get the thing to work. But a popular article on the sex-instinct has a more universal appeal to general interest, and what is written can probably be tested or applied at once for good or ill by the reader.

Again, the private citizen cannot freely employ his receiving-set for any nefarious purpose, but the amateur psychologist can either by accident or design misuse the little knowledge he has gained with disastrous results to himself and others. The erection of a wireless set is an exact business, to be accurately carried out in all its details. Psy-

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chology is not, in the same way, an exact science; differing theories are presented between which people may choose, quite literally according to their taste. And this is the second and more important feature which distinguishes it from other sciences.

To some extent a man's researches and what he sees as a result of them in the study of human nature may depend on the kind of man he is. This is not true in exactly the same way of a student in any of the natural sciences. The chemist watches his test tube: Will the liquid it contains turn deep blue or only puce? That is the question which intrigues him, and much may depend on the reply. But if the liquid eventually turns deep blue, the chemist will be in no doubt about it. Even if he is colour-blind or has mixed up blue and puce in his head he can call in a trustworthy assistant to put him right. But his moral character, his general outlook on life will exercise no influence either on the liquid or on his judgment about its colour. He will not be more inclined to think it is blue because he is unselfish, or to try and persuade himself that it is puce because he is in the habit of nagging his wife or of travelling first with a third-class ticket.

But, unlike the chemist, the student of human nature can hardly look at his subject except through the spectacles of his own temperament and character. The good psychologist makes allowances for this disqualification; he is psycho-analysed himself and gains all the knowledge of himself which he can possibly acquire; he does this partly in order

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that, if possible, he may prevent himself arguing to conclusions which, for purely personal and therefore unscientific reasons, he would like to reach.¹ But self-knowledge will not entirely free him from bias. No man who has experienced love, hate or fear, who believes in God or has violently denied God can assess and analyse faith or fear, love or hate, in other people and in mankind at large with scientific detachment; and if psychologist there be who knows not the most passionate emotions, into whose experience religious or moral questionings have entered little or not at all, then he lacks an essential item of equipment for really understanding the human nature which is his study. His observations will be exact, impartial, free enough from deliberate or unconscious prejudgments; but in the pattern of life which he examines there are colours and threads which he is incapable of seeing.

Thus the last few years' flood of psychological literature presents us with psychologies of all types. There is the coldly analytical book that seems unsympathetic and as if its writer regarded human nature as a mere laboratory which will yield exact and classifiable results which must not be questioned. There is the book that makes the agnostic say, "This is obviously written from a Christian point of view; the man is an unconscious victim of his own God-complex." There is the

¹ It is at least questionable whether a man, given a stable temperament and sound judging power to start with, necessarily in all instances improves the latter through submitting to psycho-analysis himself.

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book that makes the Christian believer say, "This man dismisses religion far too lightly as merely subjective. He accuses us of rationalizing, but he can't prove that he's not himself rationalizing. What about his own complexes? He fits his psychology into his own disbelief. Balmforth¹ or Thouless² are at least as convincing." Or, again, there is the writer who quite obviously hates conventional morality, or is out of sympathy with moral idealism. So it is that the general public read certain semi-popular works on psycho-analysis and claim to find in them scientific theories justifying hedonism, self-indulgence, the abandonment of a Christian moral standard. It is not psychology that leads these people astray, but either the point of view of particular psychologists by no means unanswerable, nor unanswered, or the readers' own misunderstanding or misapplication of what they read.

For psychology itself is the science of efficient living; it does not include the study of right living. The part cannot include the whole. But Christianity, the science of right living, should include the study of efficient living. No Christian can be said to be living rightly if he is not living efficiently; nor is psychology likely to be spiritualized until Christians take psychology into their own religious life, or at any rate expect efficiency in daily life as one of the marks of Christian belief and practice.

At present there is no such general expectation

¹ "Is Christian Experience an Illusion?"

² "An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion."

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among Christians. We expect much else. We say or think of someone: "He has peculiarly strong temptations to drink (or lust or ill-temper or selfish ambition), and yet he is always gentle, courteous, self-denying. It's not really surprising; his religion is a reality to him; he lives in very close communion with God." And the comment is probably true. Another comment which might be made with equal truth of many other people is seldom in our minds or on our lips; and it is this: "What a remarkably good speaker so-and-so is; I know he's a man of prayer and I expect that's the reason." Or, "What an extraordinary good day's work he puts in at the office; he never wastes a moment; he's wonderfully accurate. I expect it's because he is not far from the Kingdom of God." Christians do not so commonly think in this kind of way because often they have been brought up to a narrow conception of Christ's standard. Yet if He came that we might have life and more abundant life, He surely meant us to expect in His power to be at our very best in every possible direction; not of course to be consummate workmen at that for which we have no aptitude at all; but at least to make sure that no talent is mouldering in a napkin for lack of belief in it and in Him.

In the last resort mere executive efficiency is not for Christians the ideal standard by which life should be lived. But it is a wholesome and searching and for many of us a necessary test of the reality and depth of our religious life. And those who ever conduct a self-examination with the intention

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of remedying what in God's sight is wrong might well add to the list of questions : " Am I efficient ? " The sin of inefficiency, if admitted, will be traceable to mental as well as to moral causes, and the method of the remedy for it will lie partly in the mind.

In the whole mental equipment the part played by imagination is so important in relation to the efficient conduct of life that some consideration of it will now follow. It will lead us far afield and beyond a mere idea of efficiency in any narrow or worldly sense, and we must remember that to be efficient in the highest sense is to express ourselves at our best and through us Christ Himself in the service of mankind.

The first thing to be done is to remove from imagination the stigma which often rests upon it, for it is a perfectly respectable quality. It is not a disreputable kind of guessing machine, nor yet again, as many people suppose, a faculty for inventing what is not true. It is a wrong use of words to speak of anything as being " only imagination." It would be as correct to say of half-a-sovereign—if such a coin can still be found—" It's not of any value; it's *only* gold." It might be true to say, " I do not want it; it's gold and I'm not looking for gold just now," just as I might say of something I had heard, " I don't believe it to be true; his imagination has led him astray." But the word " only " suggests that imagination is in itself something to be despised and distrusted, whereas it is at least as real as and much more valuable than gold itself.

Imagination is the faculty, possessed by all

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rational beings, of making and remaking mental pictures of that which cannot be apprehended by the physical senses. We possess this faculty in different degrees of quantity and quality. One man has a faulty imagination or small imaginative power; another has a quick or vivid imagination, or is even "over-imaginative." One man neglects this faculty altogether, another depends upon it too much.

I think of the friend I once knew and now can no longer meet; in my mind's eye I place him once again in the setting in which I last saw him or knew him best. I can see again the furniture in that room, the book-case which never stood quite straight to the wall, the hole in the carpet which in old days always made me casually wonder whether a dropped match or a cinder had burnt it. And my friend is talking again—the turn of the head, the intonation of the voice, the expression of the eye, they all come back to me. Through my faculty of imagination I can recapture some such scene for a moment or two and almost live it over again. For the present it does not matter whether this is a good thing to do or not. It is sufficient to record that the picture upon which my mind dwells is in all essential features a perfectly accurate picture. It corresponds to a reality of my own experience. It is not *only* imagination.

A man may tell a good story well and be much in demand for "the latest," or be implored to repeat the favourite tale of Clarence and the hedgehog. He does so, and the story has become enriched by the passage of years; his imaginative power has

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improved it; he could not now say for certain which parts of the story are his own decoration, which part the original anecdote. Indeed he may deny, quite sincerely, that it has been in the least embellished, and stoutly or even crossly maintain that it is still the story exactly as he first heard it from a friend who "knew Clarence (or the hedgehog) personally."

We need not stop to discuss the morality of the raconteur. It is, however, a more serious matter when imagination about the past leads a man first to put in a few details that he *wished had been true* because they make his account more impressive or more flattering to himself, and then to repeat these additions so often that they become to himself matters of actual historical fact. Now it is just sheer nonsense to say of his conduct: "That's the worst of having a vivid imagination." It would be just as sensible to say of a fraudulent company-promoter or cashier: "That's the worst of having a head for figures." When a man of brilliant intellectual power uses it in defence of a bad cause or to achieve an end that is in itself evil, it is not his brains that are at fault, it is something else in him that is wrong. And that "something else" is allowed to use his brains for a wrong purpose. In the same way, in the example we are considering, imagination proves a useful instrument to the man who for some underlying reason or other wishes to reach a certain goal. The instrument to start with is in itself good; if it is constantly used in any particular way, good or bad, that way becomes a habit, and the habit becomes an almost

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inevitable characteristic of the instrument itself. That is how a man develops bandy-legs, stooping shoulders or a perverted imagination; as the hoop becomes an actual quality of the legs and shoulders, so the perversion becomes a permanent element in the imagination.

Imagination was just now popularly described as the faculty of making and remaking mental pictures of that which cannot be apprehended by the physical senses, and so far we have considered briefly one or two illustrations of the place of imagination in past experience. But the uses of this faculty are not confined to the purpose of aiding the memory to recall the past. It is also an instrument which a man may use about the present and the future.¹

It is, for example, as important to be able to visualize the experiences of another man as to recall one's own. To put oneself "in another man's position" is often necessary for two entirely separate reasons. In commercial transactions, in any human relationship in which one man's wits are pitted against another's, the ability of one

¹ The distinctions that are made in this chapter between past, present and future may have, for some readers, but little meaning. For those who live at all frequently in the realm of imagination the distinction seems false. Both the past and the future become to them the present moment, and they experience a sense of ultimate reality to which time must seem an arbitrary dimension. The threefold division, however, is made here as it enables us more clearly to define or consider the main uses to which imagination is put. If we are to develop and direct this faculty aright, we are bound to consider it self-consciously and to some extent artificially, in order to reach a clear understanding of the uses to which we are putting or failing to put it day by day.

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man to see the matter from the other's point of view may be the means by which he foresees with some degree of probability how that man will act.¹ The mental picture he makes corresponds to a reality. Intuition, a flair for guessing right, may serve well instead of a keen imagination in such circumstances, but a keen imagination is always a useful and sometimes indispensable weapon for the battle of life.

Some people know the value of this use of imagination for less interested motives. To see anything from another man's standpoint is the first step towards helping him in trouble, or treating him fairly in controversy. Conduct which in others seems to us unreasonable and unjustifiable often may seem to be so, not because it does not really admit of explanation, but simply because we have not the ability to see and understand the fear, the injured pride, the sensitive delicacy which would explain to us conduct which otherwise merely offends or baffles us. Sympathy with sorrow and trouble is the talent of any warm-hearted person, but sympathy of the biggest kind is a quality of head and not only heart. The friend "who always seems to understand" is the friend who loves me not only with his heart but also with his mind, as the Christian is bidden love God; who not only cares, but thinks because he cares, and has the imagination to see the picture of my life as I see it myself. His imagination corresponds to a reality of my own experience. Yet we may

¹ For an admirable study in imagination read "The Second Degree" in "The Green Curve," by Ole Luk-Oie (Blackwood).

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be compelled later to consider the dangers of too vivid an imagination or a twisted imagination as an instrument for making pictures of the present, as we have already seen that this instrument may be faulty or wrongly used in its application to the past.

Most of all is the use of imagination discredited as "mere fancy" when it makes pictures about what is called the future, yet here more than elsewhere is this wonderful faculty of the mind a necessary instrument in the achievement of any progress. In front of man as he moves slowly down the road that leads into the future lies a seemingly unending field for knowledge he has not yet acquired. If the last hundred years, and more particularly the first quarter of the twentieth century, have immensely added to man's store of knowledge, the advance has but served to open his eyes more and more to the vastness of that which is still unknown to him.

Some of this advance in knowledge we may ascribe to chance; someone would have bumped into the American continent one day if Columbus had not sought it. A chemist may in his researches stumble almost by accident into some discovery upon which he was not bent. But most advances in knowledge are the result of deliberate intent, and few of them would have been made if explorers and scientists were unimaginative men. Of all implements needed in the search for truth imagination is one of the most necessary. The physicist is forever picturing possibilities, trying to imagine the unseen and the unknown; again and again his

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picture corresponds to no reality; it was a false picture, and he has failed. And then some day the picture he has made fits a fact hitherto unknown, and under his leadership mankind takes another step along the path of knowledge.

The artist, be he poet or painter or composer of music, does no creative work which is merely fanciful. The greatest works of art touch some chord in the universal experience of men, and faintly reflect an ultimate beauty the apprehension of which in its completeness no one being may gain. Of this beauty—unseen and unheard—the artist through his imagination catches a glimpse or a vibration, and he translates his own experience into concrete form which other men may see or hear.

No less than all these, the artist, the scientist, the explorer, may the man of religion claim that the imaginative faculty is a perfectly legitimate instrument with which to seek God. He too will have his false imaginings which lead him into a desert where no truth that will ever satisfy him is to be found; unlike the scientist he can never point to any proof, which an agnostic would consider adequate, that the picture he makes corresponds to any eternal reality. This is why the hostile critic, while allowing the exercise of imagination in every other sphere, yet denies its use to those who claim that they too have the right to employ this faculty in the apprehension of the things which are not seen because they are eternal. This denial is hardly fair. "I hear voices telling me what to do. They come from God," says Joan in Mr. Bernard Shaw's "Saint Joan." Robert: "They

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come from your imagination." Joan : " Of course. That is how the messages of God come to us." It is true that the man of religion has sometimes started from no rational basis ; what he now believes to be true may have come to him as an " inspiration," he would say. Nor is the fact of such " sudden conversion " to be entirely disposed of by any purely psychological explanation, and many psychologists do not claim to be able to account wholly for this phenomenon. But neither does the man of art start the flights of his imagination from any argued probability that makes its appeal to his power of reason. He seeks to express that with which his imagination inspires him, not what he has reasoned out.

The scientist is on a different footing ; the direction his imagination will take is generally governed by certain conclusions already established, if not finally at any rate firmly enough to provide him with a starting-place. He often knows more or less what to expect. As he stands at the cross-roads, his knowledge of the country he has already passed, his intimate experience as a traveller seeking his way, gives him a shrewd idea as to which of the many paths confronting him are most worth trying. Arguing from facts already in his possession he enters the realm of speculative experiment, imagining probabilities, picturing the goal.

Many a Christian will claim to be at least as well provided with grounds for encouragement in his search for God. He points to a revelation at a moment in the history of man, two thousand years ago, and if he is taunted with his inability to prove

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every detail in that record, or with the Church's tendency from time to time to shift the grounds of its defences, he may well reply that science of to-day has profoundly modified the scientific "certainties" of fifty years ago and is far less ready now than then to promulgate "final conclusions."

Once again let us suppose that I try to picture my friend not as I used to know him but as he now is beyond death. Quite independently of the Christian revelation I have an unreasoned and almost irrational conviction that there was that in him which was indestructible. I say that I "simply can't imagine" that he has ceased to be. Further, I have grounds, reasonable enough for myself, given me in the revelation of Jesus of Nazareth to believe that this conviction may be not only the irrational desire which is father of its own thought nor a mere survival of primitive racial impulse; in the experience of the Christian revelation and of the Church which enshrines it I have my starting-place, sufficient justification for me in thinking of my friend as spirit immortal, if I care to do so. No-one has ever yet proved the contrary, though many have tried. The country beyond death remains "unknown." Men may say that it is unknowable; they may refuse to share my belief; they may say that I cannot produce sufficiently conclusive evidence in support of my conviction. But one thing they cannot honestly or fairly deny to me, and that is the right to use this faculty of the mind, imagination, in my quest into the unknown. They cannot honestly deny that the picture I have of my friend *may* correspond

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to a reality; they cannot at least deny it on the score that it is "only imagination." Faith is in the realm of the imagination, and neither of faith nor of imagination in itself need any man be ashamed.

CHAPTER II
IMAGINATION AND BELIEF

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IMAGINATION AND BELIEF

IN the past chapter the influence of bias in psychological thought was raised and the validity of religious experience was briefly discussed. In both these questions the main point of interest is really the same—how far can I trust any conclusion that I reach as being certainly the result of a purely logical process? Even if imagination is a legitimate instrument, how can I be certain that my own use of it is legitimate, and that the mental pictures I make correspond to an absolute reality? In other words, since they have discovered the frequent snare of rationalization people tend to be paralysed by the impossibility of unbiassed thought in themselves and mankind at large.

The truth must be accepted and faced that there is, intellectually, no final solution of this problem. We must admit that we all rationalize, that all of us, rarely or constantly, more or less, act and think as we feel inclined to act and think, but claiming that we do so for supposed reasons which are as a matter of fact neither the real causes of our action nor logically sufficient to justify that action. There is no escape from this dilemma, and the secularist does not free himself from it by drawing

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such loud attention to the fact that the Christian is involved in it.¹

Yet, for the conduct of life we must make a way of escape, and this book is concerned not with the niceties of armchair discussion, but with the practical everyday problems of conduct. Anyone who leads an active life and is obliged constantly to make moral decisions is forced to free himself from academic agnosticism and the impotence which belongs to the unanswered questioner. Having done his best to know himself, to penetrate the secret places of his own heart, to discover as far as he can the unconscious motive, and to be honest with himself, he will make his decisions and not be forever questioning them after they are made.

On the great question of the validity of religious experience he will choose between two courses: either because God in Christ has not been proved beyond suspicion of rationalization he will reject that belief and base his conduct upon some other foundation; or judging that God, from the very nature of the case, cannot be so proved, he will assume that his own experience of God in Christ is not a figment of fancy but is a legitimate apprehension of an absolute reality. He may decide upon the second course as the result originally of a tentative and quite justifiable use of his imagination in the search for religious truth.

¹ While revising these pages I have read Dr. Crichton Miller's "The New Psychology and the Preacher." On page 53 he says, "Let it be quite clear that the upholders of religion have no monopoly of complexes and repressions, and that the standpoint of science is no adequate guarantee of unbiased thinking nor of disinterested logic."

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The question will not be further discussed in these pages,¹ which are written for the aid of people who are already basing their lives on Christianity or are prepared to try it out. For the practical difficulties of the application of the Christian Faith to daily life are very great and only exist as a vital concern for those who are trying to make that application. Taking our approach therefore from the place of imagination, the first difficulty to be encountered is one which is not generally recognized and so requires definition. Once we admit the faculty of imagination to an honoured place in the make-up of the human personality, its use and abuse in the sphere of our religious faith become matters of primary importance. These can best be explained by an enquiry into the three chief expressions taken by man's faith in a religious creed or indeed in anything.

Faith in Christianity may be static—a position; it may be dynamic—a driving force; or it may be sedative—a dope. A man holds it, lives it or relapses into it. The first state is the commonest among professing Christians. Their faith is a possession, like a name or a nationality. At best it is something to be proud of and if need be to defend, and many, though not nearly enough, Christian believers could defend it by serious argument when called upon. It influences their own lives more or

¹ I do not pretend to have done more than indicate my appreciation of the reality of the problem to many people. For a more adequate discussion of it I must refer the reader to the books mentioned on page 7 and to Professor Barry's "Christianity and Psychology."

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less, often less, and, whether more or less, for the most part unconsciously. It is the faith of dogma undigested and of religious fact largely unrelated to daily life. To those who hold it it is a truth but only seldom a reality. There is lacking not the power of imagination but the use of imagination which alone could make true things real.

I do not think it is correct to define anyone as actually unimaginative, though we may vary in the degree of imagination we possess; the faculty may become atrophied by neglect but it is never entirely absent; it could be developed and used; it is in many a latent capacity, a rusty implement. The static faith of the unimaginative man resembles, for instance, the attitude of thousands of our countrymen towards unemployment or the evils of overcrowding. Vaguely or in statistical detail they know the facts; they accept them as true. But they do not attempt to form any picture of the actuality those statistics represent, and the statements of fact remain unfired by the imagination which alone will bring home to such people as a reality what they already know to be true. The religious faith of many people is the same; it is a truth that lacks reality; it does not inspire daily life; it regulates conduct to a certain extent, largely by prohibitions and inhibitions. A critical strain of fear, anxiety or sorrow, brought to bear on its possessor may kindle such a faith into a living reality or may merely reveal its formality and lack of life, so that it crumbles away and disappears. It is not effective as Christ taught faith should be,

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and its ineffectiveness is due psychologically to a lack of intelligent imagination.

Such failure to use the imagination in religion is probably no worse than that misuse of it which turns faith into dope. To this danger are peculiarly liable those people in whom the imaginative faculty is overdeveloped or out of control, or others who live in an atmosphere of ecclesiastical emotionalism of one kind or another.¹ In order to understand this misuse of the imagination it is necessary to examine further the place of this faculty in the growth of the individual.

Most of us remember enough of our childhood to agree with the statement that life is difficult for the young, and that even spoilt or coddled children have a good deal of painful adjustment to make in order to adapt themselves to human existence in the modern world. The infant's first cry is the beginning of a protest which in different forms is constantly reiterated. The hard realities of daily life—cold water, hair-brushes, the regrettable tendency of china to break and of nurse or aunt to be angry when that happens, doses of medicine, the veto imposed on pulling the cat's tail, bedtime, Sunday clothes, obedience—all these must be borne somehow or other.

And not only must they be tolerated for a time; they, or similar impositions, must be accepted as permanent features of existence to which the child must get accustomed. This adjustment to the

¹ In the following description I do not include the genuine mystic who cannot fairly be brought within the same general classification.

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conditions of existence is often not instantaneous; it takes time. It is made bearable and possible for the child only by the child's faculty of imagination. For instance, the small boy is told to stop playing with the tongs and coal because he is making a noise and becoming dirty. Reluctantly he obeys. The world around him will not let him do what he likes. For a moment or two he is hemmed in and confined by cruel circumstance. But only for a moment. "May I sit on the top of the sofa?" he asks. Permission is given provided the tongs do not accompany him. Three minutes later he has escaped into a world of his own making where no-one can say him nay. The sofa is his bus of which he is the driver; two or three cushions are luggage; if his mother will not consent to be a passenger a footstool will do instead. In his imagination he turns corners, picks up and puts down passengers, goes uphill and down, collects fares and punches tickets and is finally tipped at the end of his journey. He has escaped for a time from the harsh realities of ordinary life and has compensated himself by the free enjoyment of an unreal world of his own.

The picture which this boy makes in his mind corresponds to no reality, and in that respect it is unlike any use of the imagination so far considered. It does not even correspond to any supposed reality in the future. The boy is not necessarily dreaming of the day when he will own a motor-car. That is another and slightly different form of day-dream that may come at a later age. In the very present, here and now, he is driving his own bus; he has

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plunged himself into the very canvas of his picture and become an immediate part of it. When he is told off to bed the spell may not immediately pass; he trots off consoling himself with the delusion that he is the busman going home, or even that his bed is a steamer. From beginning to end the whole self-entertainment is the purest fiction, but both valuable and necessary; most of a child's natural channels for self-expression are blocked, and he feels thwarted at every turn. Nature has provided him with this outlet, and indulgence in it relieves him of some of the strain of adaptation to life around him. To be neglected, to be left alone too much so that he is continually living an imaginative existence, will produce trouble later; short of such solitude children's phantasies, their dolls or toy-trains, their identification of themselves with the different characters in the story read to them after tea ("Please, I'll be the rich uncle"—"No, I'll be the rich uncle; you had him last time"), all these things have their legitimate place in the growth and development of the boy or girl.

But as the normal child grows older he does and should need less and less these means of escape into an unreal world. The games of the boy and girl, of the adolescent are no longer make-belief; they are actual. The boy still needs a rest from the strain of adjustment to life, but finds it less and less in self-constructed phantasy. His elders may moralize about games being a picture of life and teaching valuable lessons—"That's not cricket; play the game"—but the boy does not play cricket as a picture of anything; he tries to knock the middle

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stump not in fancy but because in fact he does desire to hit it and it is there to be hit. Less and less does he identify himself with characters in the books he reads; instead he pictures "what it would be like to feel like that," or wonders whether he will ever play to the films or shoot lions, and tries to imagine how he himself would behave under given circumstances. He will even idealize himself under those circumstances, even as he idealizes the heroes whom in his mind he sets up on pedestals.

Normally even such day-dreams have their strict limits and become more occasional, as new and fuller opportunities present themselves for self-expression, good or bad, in actual experience. Even the Scout Movement, designed to appeal to the imagination, only suggests mental pictures in order to translate them into the actual; the skill and cunning of Red Indians can be copied in Somerset or even in South London. Roughly the girl follows much the same line of development, though she is perhaps more liable and for longer to the lure of the sheer phantasy than is the boy.

When we become men most of us put away the childish things. Games are played still—very seriously. But if we are fortunate we have other interests, called hobbies, which give us a chance of unfettered self-expression and of relief from the strain of life. If we are less fortunate we have at any rate novels, cinemas, theatres, all of which provide the means of escape. But they are all ready-made for us; the playwright's or author's imagination supplies us with an artificial phantasy to meet our need. We lend our own share of

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imaginative power as we read the book or watch the play, but we employ it of set purpose and it is within our control. From this point onwards people vary more even than they may have differed before; some continue to use the imagination freely and frequently to practical ends in life; others use it less and less until at last they become wooden-minded; yet again others indulge it to excess. It is needless to attribute these varieties solely to an inherited tendency towards stable-mindedness or any other of the psychological types into which mankind can be divided. Imaginative power can be modified for good or ill through the influence of environment and can be further developed and controlled through religion.

The different forms of development so far mentioned are normal; most of us fall under one of these groupings or on common ground between two. But there are some people who in one sense never grow up, but retain the child's use of imagination and live too much in a dream-world of their own, and for the same reason. For instead of adapting themselves to life's difficulties they seek compensation for failure, disappointment and hardship in a world of their own imagination. They turn for refuge and consolation to some mental picture which does not necessarily correspond to any reality. The far end of this road is insanity;¹ a man may console himself with some imaginative phantasy and resort to it so often that at last it

¹ As high an authority upon the subject as the late Dr. Mercier taught students that insanity was a failure of adaptation to environment.

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seems to him the reality, and he is a slave to his own delusion. In cases where the phantasy is not so powerful or so important in its bearing on the whole life it may yet result in conduct or experiences sufficiently serious to need the skilled psychotherapist to expose the root-cause of the trouble and set the man free from his own chains.

We are not here concerned with matters which belong more properly to the province of the medical profession. But we are concerned with the difficulties of those, and there are many, who may never need professional assistance of that kind and yet are living below their proper level of efficiency as a result of this particular misuse of the imagination. And in this present chapter our concern is the misuse of imagination by those who have recourse to their religion as to a drug.

Any approach to this subject must be made in reverence and sympathy. The state of mind now to be described is due less to the people who exhibit it than to those who have fostered it in them or allowed it to develop unregulated. It can best be understood by comparison with the two other uses to which any article of a religious creed may be put. What is known as the "Communion of Saints" affords a simple illustration. Many professing Christians could attach little meaning to this phrase; their belief in it is static,—a mere acceptance. In so far as the words define a belief in the continued life and activity of those who have passed into the unseen they would defend it, if necessary, against attack and stoutly maintain that it was true. Otherwise they seldom think

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about it, however often they may repeat the words, and they do not themselves experience any communion with the saints.

The man whose faith is dynamic uses his powers of imagination in order to picture the reality of that which he holds by faith. He desires to experience this article of his creed; if it be true then it has some place to fill in his own daily life. Through his use of the imagination, or to put it more broadly and simply, by using his mind about his religion, he achieves a vivid sense of the reality of communion with the departed. His faith in the reality of great spiritual forces for good is strengthened by his contemplation of the active existence of the spirits of the just released from the burden of the flesh. If he is trying faithfully to serve God at office-desk, on ranch or bench, in college, mill or hospital, wherever he may be and however hard the struggle with those around him who do not seem to care for what he believes to be right, he is buoyed up by the consciousness of that great host which no man can number, the saints of God who serve Him continually and see His face. The disciple still on earth consciously lives his life as in their sight and with their co-operation. When life is very difficult and things go hardly with him the thought of their companionship is a picture to which he turns to rekindle his energies and inspire his hope.

A man so using his belief is not doing anything that is psychologically unsound. He is not, like the child, seeking to avoid the hard realities of existence by escape into a phantastic realm which

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has no connection with actual experience. Nor is he compensating himself for his own failure by a mere fiction of his unaided imagination. He is certainly using his powers of imagination to relieve the strain of adjustment to circumstances; this, as we have already noticed, may legitimately be done in adult life. But the picture to which he turns is not a mere figment of his mind conjured up to console him. It is the representation of something which he believes, on sufficiently reasonable grounds, to be actually true, and it corresponds to a reality, compared to which the reality of material existence is itself make-belief. This is faith related to life.

Faith becomes dope when it loses this relationship by ceasing to be an inspiration and becoming a refuge only. The man who so consoles himself turns to a doctrine such as the Communion of Saints not as to a source of encouragement whereby he will be enabled to face life's demands the better, but as a compensation to himself for his inability to do so. The intention is not deliberate; he does not realize what he is doing, nor that he is using the resources of religion chiefly in order to console himself, and no longer as the dynamic of service. Within the Church the devout mourner who never after bereavement takes up this life's interests again, or, outside, the devotee of spiritualism to whom this pursuit has become an end in itself afford examples of this tendency.

The one article of the creed which we have been examining is but one illustration of the misuse to which any part of a religious faith may be put.

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It has been pointed out that it is essential to bring the imagination to play upon the truths of Christianity in order to bring them into practical relationship with daily life. It is almost equally important not so to develop imagination on this subject that religion becomes again detached from ordinary existence. Yet many so use it. This is one explanation of the apparent indifference of many genuinely religious people to the evil in the world around them. They attend many services, their minds are constantly occupied with the minutiae of religious observance, but they produce little or no output of Christian social activity. The contemplation of eternal truth is comforting and uplifting; to look the ghastly evil and injustice of human life fairly and squarely in the face is depressing. Yet many of us practically look only in one direction or the other. We yield to the depression or perhaps struggle to remove its cause in the world by our own unaided exertions; or we drug our sensitiveness to the call of the world's need by religious exercises, or ecclesiastical controversies of infinitely trifling importance, or by the concentration of all our hopes and expectations in a "future state." God is working His purpose out—let Him.

The angels of Jacob's dream give exactly the right picture of a religion which is something better than a refuge or a sedative and is intimately connected with daily life. From earth to heaven and heaven to earth they ceaselessly go; no service for man can be rendered without the constant inspiration which God alone can give; no communion with God

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must fail to find expression in the love and service of man.¹ Up to worship, down to serve—that is religion related to life; religion which is effective because it helps a man to be continually at his best as a truly efficient servant of God. And in that service the faculty of imagination has its proper place and function.

¹ Miller, *ibid.*, p. 179. "To the introvert, thrown in on himself, communion comes first and service second. To the extrovert, in constant touch with his fellows, service must necessarily be the easier. But if the introvert or extrovert tendency in the individual is likely to determine whether his religion be more contemplative or more practical, it is to be remembered that extroversion should be the discipline of the introvert, and introversion of the extrovert. . . . It had been said that one of our first duties was 'to encourage thought in the active, and activity in the thoughtful.'"

CHAPTER III

USE AND MISUSE OF IMAGINATION

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REALITY in religion is in demand by those who are at all interested in religion. Unreal language in sermons or services, unreal dogmas, ecclesiastical preoccupations which seem to ignore the practical needs of daily life, all these are difficulties in the path of those who feel the need of religion and are otherwise not unsympathetic towards Christianity. Yet organized religious bodies seem often, in their scheme of instruction, to insist too much on the mere acceptance of or acquiescence in a doctrine of the Church. A certain test must be passed, and some creed is the standard.

Those in doubt are therefore naturally inclined to regard Christian dogma from a standpoint which is almost exclusively intellectual. Yet the mere acquiescence in certain teaching, a man's willingness to say quite honestly "I believe" something which he is content to understand only in part, does not really help him much. He and the ecclesiastical body that claims his membership may be satisfied that he is duly qualified, but too often the interest on both sides stops short at that. He is orthodox and that is enough. But his life is not thereby enriched nor does his Church reap much advantage from his membership just because

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he is finally ready to believe certain doctrines as true, which do not enter as realities into his life. He may accept the Atonement, but he is worth no more in the world for that belief unless he has himself knelt on Calvary and experienced the power which comes from a conviction that his sins are forgiven. He may believe in the Divinity of Christ and in the doctrine of the Incarnation, and yet neither recognize nor love God in his fellow-men. An appreciation of what follows from the Incarnation of God in the life of man through Jesus revolutionizes one's view of the whole of life and becomes the mainspring of one's existence, and the motive of all service to man. If it does not do this for anyone, does it make very much difference to God or man whether he "believes" it or not? I accept the fact that there is an official called the Public Trustee. I am quite prepared to be pleased about it and to argue in his defence, if anyone questions his existence. But he has no reality in my life; I have no point of contact with him, nor do I desire one. Why should I?

Even supposing that there were some vital and fundamental connection, grounded in the eternal nature of my being, between myself and the Public Trustee, I could not easily appreciate this unless someone had been at pains to stimulate my imagination on the subject. In religious development our imaginations are stimulated but often in the wrong direction. The child's Bible Story Book in earliest years and the stained-glass window, first seen at an age when impressions are soaked in and start their life-long influence, provoke the imagin-

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ation to form and retain two misleading mental pictures. The first, and less injurious, is a picture of one side only of the character of Jesus—patient, gentle, loving; but even this side of Him is spoilt by an unfair suggestion of softness and effeminacy. Very few paintings or windows of Christ suggest virility and vitality.

The second picture formed as a result of much religious instruction in early life represents Jesus far away and out of reach; the teacher stimulates the child's imaginative faculty about Palestine of old, and word-pictures are made of its skirted robes, its pitchers, its strange buildings and customs, all the local colour which means so much to a child. For a time Jesus is an intense reality, and if imagination were used also to picture Jesus in the life of to-day the reality would endure. But it is seldom that this link is forged for the child as it would be if every now and then the gospel story were put in a modern setting. The background of the Leicester street-corner, the Battersea tenement, the Somerset village-green, the Yorkshire farm-house, the Coventry workshop might occasionally be substituted for the antiquities of Jericho and Nazareth.

If this is not done what often happens is that as the child grows older the reality of Jesus, which was once quite strong in his mind, fades as fades the reality with which Arabian Nights once gripped him. The love of a child for a good story with a wealth of detail from right outside the scope of his experience has been misused. When he no longer needs the psychological "compensation"

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of childhood's stories, they pass together, religious and secular alike, into the general lumber-room of memories, valuable chiefly for their associations with the people who used to tell them. Out of this lumber-room in later years we have to disentangle the story of Jesus and overcome, as best we may, the sensation that everything to do with Him took place a very long time ago under circumstances which form no parallel to the twentieth century. It is likely that this sense of unreality, with the explanation of it that has been given here, is at the root of much of the difficulty many people find to-day in thinking of Jesus in any way but as a very fine example.

This digression has been made with no capricious desire to inflict a passing criticism on religious education, but as a very relevant example of the part played by imagination in life, and of the need to develop and use it aright. For the pictures which we make tend to remain part of us and to influence us long after we have ceased consciously to dwell on them. Next in influence to the picture which child or man has of God is the picture he has of himself. Modern psychology attaches great importance to the opening stages of a child's consciousness of himself. The way in which the child regards himself has often a profound significance for the whole of his life. This is a matter that should engage the attention not only of those who have the care of children, but of all who wish to rid themselves of needless limitations and handicaps.

There is more than one way in which my picture

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or idea of myself may influence me. My imagination may have saddled me with a completely wrong picture of myself, or at least with a picture quite unlike what God meant me to be. And that false picture would then govern my life. In early years it was entirely false, that is to say it did not correspond to any reality; it was pure fiction. Later in life it is less wholly false if I have kept it in my mind, because inevitably I have grown to be like the thing I picture. For such is the power of imagination in life that we become actually like the thing we imagine, and grow into the likeness of the picture we ourselves have made. But the picture may still be partly false, if my picture of myself is not God's picture of me. His idea of me is the reality, and that what He meant me to be I can still become is the lesson of any religion that preaches power for life; it is certainly the teaching of Christianity. Equally, if from the beginning of my life my picture of myself has been a true picture of myself as God sees me, then it corresponds to a reality, and that is the kind of person I shall, with God's help, become.

We shall need to return to this subject later. Meanwhile it may be pointed out that the life and character of Jesus Christ form the representation, the picture of the sort of person God means me to be. Hence pulpit advice to think of Jesus, to seek His companionship, to study Him in the pages of the New Testament is not merely pious and professional exhortation to perform a conventional religious duty. It is one of the methods of establishing spiritual contact with the living Jesus;

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that is religion. At the same time it is the presentation of the best and noblest picture of life to our minds in order that we may hold it there and grow, not only by deliberate effort, but also insensibly and inevitably like the Person upon whom our minds dwell; that is psychology, and there is perhaps no better illustration of psychology in religion, and of the psychological value of the Church's teaching, even apart from its spiritual significance.

Loss of power, failure to find the full self-expression intended for me is only one of the bad results that may come from a wrong imagination. A wrong view of myself may be forced upon me by the repeated "suggestion" of those around me. The conceited man or woman with overbearing manners is often a typical example of this kind of result. The following analysis of the root cause of apparent conceit is, of course, only applicable to a certain number of people so afflicted.

We have struck the right road to the explanation when we attribute abrupt manners in an acquaintance to shyness. What has sometimes happened is this. The man, as boy, had parents who out of sheer lack of understanding or in the desire to press him forward, or because he was the "unwanted child," frequently told him that he was the dunce of the family. "You'll never do well in the world like Archibald." "I shouldn't be surprised if you never got a job at all." "Well, my boy, if you answer examination-papers as badly as you play straight bowling you'll never get an entrance scholarship into any decent public school." "Want

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to be a barrister? You'd never pass your finals. You'll be lucky if father takes you into his office, and he'd only do that because you're his son." "Who's broken this? Philip again! Why are you so clumsy? Everything you have to do with always seems to go wrong." "Humphrey, you're talking too much. And it's not as if you'd anything to say. You're not clever like your uncle."

Or the boy has some physical peculiarity or some other quality that attracts unfavourable notice and renders him an easy butt. Often just his own expectation of rebuffs draws them upon himself like a magnet. The bad schoolmaster finds him an easy victim upon whom to work off sarcasm; other boys at school make things deliberately difficult for him in order to see him fail in the attempt to do them. The folly (or the wickedness) of such treatment at home or at school has by no means always bad results. But when they are bad they are horrid. They would be bad enough if the boy succumbed to the volume of these "suggestions" from the herd and accepted this picture of himself as true; he would then, as we have seen already, grow up to be that which he had always been told he must inevitably become. So much waste; so much undeveloped talent and power, ignored and unused. But the boy, grown man, would not realize this and would be, no doubt, content.

The results are even worse if the victim is one of those sensitive, introspective boys who, for some reason or other, so often seem to attract this kind of discouragement from their elders. Each dis-

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paraging remark is a fresh bruise and the atmosphere of discouragement has a cumulative effect. He struggles hard against the growing conviction that he is a failure or a fool, but the bitter rebellions against it become more occasional, and at last he accepts it. He accepts it as "inevitable"; it becomes to him no mere picture of what he may become, but the reality of what he is. He gives way before it, but does not acquiesce in it. He is anxious that it should not be as obvious to others as it is to himself, and outwardly he adopts a confident manner which is far from representing the true state of his mind. Thus the confidence is artificial, exaggerated, noticeable, and gives people sometimes the impression that he is conceited and overbearing. But it does not stop at that. The conflict between the failure he knows he is and the success he would like to be is unendurable; it is a "conflict" in the psychological use of that word, and life would become impossible for such a man unless he rid his consciousness of the struggle.

He must therefore deceive not only others but also himself. Dope of some kind must be found. He finds it in the equally false, though quite opposite picture of himself as really an exceptionally fine fellow. He has to play the part pretty thoroughly, and only by overacting it can he drug the conscious sense of failure. The outward result is a boastful, overtalkative man, making himself the pivot of every conversation, laying down the law on every kind of subject, always turning the lime-light on himself. The last stage perhaps is one in which the man has actually succeeded in forgetting

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that he ever had any sense of inferiority at all. The psychological compensation he fashioned for himself has been successful and he may even become a successful man. But if so, failure in life has been defeated at a tremendous and quite unnecessary cost.

The arrogant manner in a person may of course be due to an utterly different life-history from that considered above. It may be the perfectly natural outcome for the "spoilt child." From earliest infancy he has been surrounded with an atmosphere of adulation; everyone lets him know how attractive and clever he is, how rich he will be, how certain to get everything he wants, how seldom he is ever wrong. This picture put before him no doubt corresponds in part to a reality, but it is exaggerated and morally unhealthy because it has no moral foundation. The boy and man accepts it as true, and without perhaps trying seriously to justify it in fact, behaves as if it were true. It has become a reality to him and no one who meets him for more than five minutes can fail to notice it.

This consideration of conceit and its causes illustrates the importance of examining the part played by the mind in moral conduct. It is acknowledged that most, if not all, human action can be explained in terms of mind, conscious or unconscious. The implications of that fact may be considered later in connection with religion. Now it should be noticed that, in spite of the truth of this, religious people sometimes handicap themselves by attempting to develop their virtues or cure their faults with almost no reference to the

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part played in both by their minds. Even if we believe that the Spirit of God is the only ultimate source of the defeat of evil and the power whereby good is developed, we may hold too that there must be a method of the Spirit's working in us, "a way of escape" from temptation which we are bound to try and find. In a previous book I tried to point out the necessity of finding for our sins, our faults of character, some more detailed and tangible explanation than the fact that they were due to evil within us. An analysis of arrogance or conceit in ourselves, or in others who ask our help, demonstrates this necessity.

I ask myself the question, "Why am I like this? Have I been spoilt? Am I really rather an unusually successful person, or am I just indulging a phantasy for my own satisfaction? Am I playing a part, or do I really think about myself as I give outsiders the impression that I think?" If, in answer, I find that I am simply suffering from swelled head the course is clear. But the grace of Christian humility will not be achieved in a week, and I must think out and follow some considered plan of discipline. The plan, however, will be very different if I discover that really at bottom I have a contemptible opinion of myself, that I am always expecting to be humiliated, always trying to attract notice which I know I don't deserve, crushed by the half-forgotten memories of perpetual discouragements. If this is the discovery, then what I lack is not humility but faith. It is no good humbling or disciplining myself. There has been too much of that. My sin has been that I have given in to this thing. I

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have accepted man's picture of myself instead of God's. His will is that I should be an efficient person ; He never meant me to be a failure, and in His power I need not be. Nor need I bolster up my spirits by a false semblance of superiority ; if it deceives others it can no longer deceive myself, and has therefore become objectless.

Thus imagination, rightly used, turns truth into reality, and wrongly used makes seem a reality that which is not even true. Many of us misuse it in other ways less serious than those already described, but equally to be regretted by all who wish to live by Christ's standard of honesty with self. Unless a man's self-examination is thorough, a genuinely analytical attempt to know himself, he will fail to detect and to look fully in the face some weakness of character or bad habit of which he is guilty. Just because he has a high standard (if he has) he must either frankly recognize the weakness or disregard it entirely. Imagination, as we have already seen, is the instrument whereby human beings seek to overcome or to compensate themselves for the hardships or difficulties of their environment. It is this faculty that the man employs to conceal from himself the fault which he will not frankly own, but about which he is uncomfortable. Such discomfort is a distraction not to be suffered, particularly when we are all possessed of a convenient mental apparatus which acts almost mechanically to save us from it.

The man's fault, let us suppose, is stinginess ; in order to escape the self-accusation that he is mean he fabricates, without realizing it fully, the phantasy

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that he is open-handed and generous, and that meanness is, above all else, the thing that he most loathes. The general statement that we all see and condemn in other people only or chiefly the faults or besetting sins that are peculiarly our own, is probably an exaggeration. But it is true that many are liable to do this. A man's vigour in denouncing meanness as a world-fault helps to blind his own eyes to a similar failing in himself and to open his eyes wider and wider to the pretty picture he has made of himself as "the man who hates stinginess." This phantasy clouds his judgment of other people, so that he becomes more and more incapable of seeing clearly enough to pull the mote out of his brother's eye because of the beam in his own.¹

This projection of our faults or weaknesses on to other people in order that we may escape from them ourselves is particularly noticeable in matters of sex. Dr. Hadfield has analyzed some of the factors which account psychologically at any rate for the devotion of man or woman to rescue work or campaigns for social purity.² They are nothing to be ashamed of; they do not lessen the value of the work done; an element in the make-up of such people may explain why some of them have chosen one particular form of service rather than another; if their motive is the Glory of God or the well-being of their fellow-creatures they may be humbly thankful that an element of their natural endowment is being used profitably and not wasted or

¹ St. Matt. vii.

² "Psychology and Morals," p. 169.

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misemployed. But the person who has an almost exclusive interest in sex-problems, who is ready to suspect sex-abuse or perversion in almost anyone or anything, to whom it is the one big sin, is often the victim of a reaction from sex-temptation or sex-mismanagement in his own life, from which he seeks to escape.

It is a waste of denunciation to brand the stingy man, already mentioned, and others who escape from their own faults in similar fashion, as hypocrites. It is probable that the percentage of people who, knowing themselves, deliberately set out to deceive the world around them is comparatively small. The root of what we think of as hypocrisy is self-deception, and that is very common. Generally the only cure for insincerity towards others is honesty with oneself. Criticism from the world around us is hard enough to bear, but criticism of oneself, the heart's recognition of its own rottenness and refusal to deal with it is insupportable. The mental machinery which protects us from the second generally protects us from the first as well, unless we do protest too much.

I do not know whether "projection" has been put forward as an explanation, at any rate in part, of certain racial, political or other prejudices which almost amount to obsessions in some people. I do not mean the person about whom you may discover, if you know him well, that he dislikes Jews or papists or Scotchmen or lawyers or Tories or parsons or bolshevists. Let it be admitted that any such dislike may be intelligible enough, even though unfair. But some men allow that kind of

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prejudice to become an obsession. Measured in their judgment, temperate and even sympathetic in their criticism of all else, they seem to have one subject, Jews for instance, on the brain. They will tell us that Jews are the one great menace; all evil has its root in them; they are unspeakable.

It is true that all races, all classes, all movements have their disagreeable attributes, but no considerable section of society, national or international, is wholly poisonous, and anyone who tries to argue the contrary stands self-condemned as unbalanced save to another with the same obsession. Many explanations of this state of mind are advanced, for instance a very severe injury of some kind from a member of the hated class in early life; or inherited racial antipathy. It seems possible also that "projection" may sometimes account for it. In the group or class which he hates so passionately a man sees good qualities which he has at one time despaired of developing, success which is beyond his own reach. His own failure and disappointment must be concealed from himself and compensated in some way. The feelings of a man towards the group to which he just does not, by an accident, perhaps of birth, belong can be very bitter.

But it is even more likely, as we have noted in another instance, that any bad characteristic which is generally supposed to mark the group which has incurred a man's hatred may be that man's own chief characteristic. He refuses to recognize it in himself. Because he is of a sensitive conscience and has perhaps set himself a high standard, he hates the hidden flaw. But that he may live

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peaceably with himself his imagination has created the pleasing fiction that this flaw does not exist in him just because he loathes it utterly. Because he cannot hate it in himself he hates it in other people, and hates other people for it. On the principle that we often feel free to abuse a Railway Company or a Meteorological Office as soulless neuters when we would not so readily abuse a Railway Director or the Clerk of the Weather, if we knew their names, so this man focuses his animosity on a whole class. This has the additional advantage of enabling him to spread himself over his favourite subject without ever needing to cramp his style through lack of material. It would be a healthy question for any fanatical hater to ask himself, "Do I hate the Jews because I am myself inclined to resemble what I hate in them?" or, "Have I Bolshevism on the brain because at heart in some sphere of my life I am myself a moral anarchist, or wish I could be?"

Reference was just now made to Dr. Hadfield's explanation, psychologically, of certain forms of social service as derived from sexual curiosity or other emotion connected with a primary instinct. Such analysis of his virtues will repay the student of Christian conduct as much as an examination into the psychological definition of his faults, and what Dr. Hadfield has to say on the subject demands careful consideration.¹ The underlying truth of his contention may be noted here, though it will receive further attention in the sixth chapter. For ourselves one of the most practical examples

¹ "Psychology and Morals," ch. 23.

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may be taken from the self-assertive instinct which is common to us.

One man finds satisfaction for this instinct in controlling half-a-dozen newspapers, another in exercising a controlling interest in a large number of financial undertakings, one woman in using her charms to pull wires behind the scenes, another in educating her own or other people's children; one man in swaying an audience to his will, another in leading a troop of boy-scouts; one in despotism, another in leadership. The instinctive desire to leave our mark, to exert influence, to impose ourselves on others is almost universal. It is one and the same energy which informs the bully, the petty tyrant of the domestic hearth, the curate trying to "win" his Bible Class, the parent who refuses to recognize that his children are grown up, the flirt, the social reformer busily organizing a committee, and the club-bore in the West End. If it is denied an outlet in one direction it bursts out in another.

Different instincts are also no doubt influencing one or other of these people as well, but the will to power, natural assertiveness is there too. It is a perfectly legitimate and necessary instinct, and it can be used well or ill. The Christian must take account of it in taking stock of himself. The truth of it need create no real difficulty for him unless his sense of values is obscured by a concern about "merit." A narrow gospel of "personal salvation" sometimes concentrates the attention upon this distracting question of merit. It is a quite definitely unchristian preoccupation; the question is asked: "But if it is only instinct that makes me want to

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go to the Mission Field or help the down-and-out or run a boys' club, does it really count? Am I any better than the man who uses it to get into Parliament?" No, quite brutally, is the answer. You may be better employed (or you may not), but if you are seeking to acquire merit it can't be done along those lines. To adopt the great confession, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we felt inclined to do."

So extremely expressed this is an exaggeration. The work of the missionary or of the club-worker cannot be fully described in terms of the self-assertive instinct alone; but it is true that that God-given urge to action has much to do with it, and any question of merit or marks is not the concern of the person who is impelled, in part by that urge, to righteousness. And the latter, whether or not in an extravagance we describe it as "filthy rags," is not what we plead before God, but rather the love and perfection and sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Indeed some of us can afford to apply a proper humility a stage further. One of the finest and most unselfish social workers I have known, who was killed in the war, used to ask whether his own and some others' entry into the ranks of social workers or of the ministry itself was not an escape out of walks of life where competition was keener into a sphere of activity where little kingships were more easily created and leadership more quickly achieved. Many of those devoting their lives to missionary or social service will agree that, in spite of its difficulties and disappointments, it does give scope for self-expression through influence, organ-

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ization and leadership which they themselves could not have found in the bank or the shop or the more strenuous competition of political life.

Let it be admitted. If God has used that instinct to draw recruits for a form of service that is still hopelessly understaffed, let us be thankful that we ourselves have been so impelled, humble enough to recognize that He has led us to use a natural endowment in a particular direction, and grateful enough to acknowledge the joy of it. Another friend of mine who before the war was once arguing with me a case for the mere pleasure-seeker against the missionary, social reformer or slum-worker, concluded by saying: "You people are pleasing yourselves really; you wouldn't be happy doing anything else; you're simply doing what you *want* to do. Well, I'm not the kind of person who likes that kind of thing. I please myself in other ways. At bottom you're just as selfish as I am. You do what you like. So do I." In the eleven years which have passed since then I have learnt nothing that would incline me to answer him in any other way than I then replied. "I agree. I don't claim any superior merit to yourself on the score of unselfishness. I would only point out that whereas it might be shown that my selfishness is sometimes of some use to somebody else, yours benefits no one but yourself." He had the grace to respond: "No, I don't believe it does; but that doesn't affect me."

For a reason there was no further discussion, but the conclusion on the Christian side would be: "It does and will affect you. But in any case the

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need of the world calls to men and women to find their happiness in a satisfaction of self that shall create rather than waste, help rather than hinder, mend rather than break."

If there is any further retort to this I do not know it.

CHAPTER IV

FAITH AND SUGGESTION

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THE teaching associated with the name of Emile Coué has been more than once a nine days', or nine weeks', wonder in our country. It has had its exuberant welcome, its wide advertisement and popularity, and has doubtless suffered from the reaction which invariably follows any new thing that has been made into a craze. The Christian Church cannot afford to lose yet again the truths of which it was the reminder, nor the lessons which it brought. We can find the right approach to these along the line so far followed in this book.

The phrase "God's picture of us" has already been used. If we believe in a personal God and in the whole Christian idea of the Fatherhood of God we are bound, in considering our practical relationship to Him, to use terms which seem commonplace or even impertinent in their application to One Whose ways are not as our ways nor His thoughts as our thoughts. But Christ Himself bid us attempt so to understand God, and there is no other way. Therefore in speaking of God's picture of the souls of men I am not referring to any theory that man exists only as a thought of God, "a pulse in the eternal mind," but simply to His perfect and complete knowledge of us in contrast

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to our false or imperfect understanding of ourselves. Within narrower limits so does the earthly father know his child. He sees possibilities of development, latent talents and powers of which the child has no idea.

It is from God's knowledge of the good rather than of the evil in us that we must start. It is necessary that the self-righteous and self-satisfied should be forced, if possible, to "see themselves as God sees them," meaning to see the faults and sins which injure Eternal Love. But it is a deplorably negative view to take of Eternal Love that His contemplation of us is simply a contemplation of that which is evil in us. It is a hideous relic of the policeman-round-the-corner notion of God that the words "see ourselves as God sees us" should instantly suggest to us our moral infirmities. Because God became in Jesus incarnate in human life I know that I too am a son of God and that God when He looks on me sees good as He sees good in all men. Love is like that. However little there is of good in any man, Love sees it first, Love sees all of it and Love sees it all the time. Love sees evil as well, but that is a side of truth that in some connections has received an emphasis at the cost of due attention to this other.¹

One of the most important stages in spiritual progress is that in which we attempt, and succeed in the attempt, to see ourselves as God sees us, and to accept His "picture" of us as our own picture of ourselves. For reasons which will appear shortly

¹ Some of us tend to be so bound to the idea of "original sin" that we ignore the possibility of "original righteousness."

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I propose to consider chiefly God's view of our moral state and spiritual capacity rather than of our physical health. However weak, foolish, sinful I may have been, however low my actual output of positive good, I am in God's sight a person who both should and can rise above all that I have ever been. To Him I am a person who need know no fear, who can grow in strength and power beyond anything which I have conceived. That is not only God's view of me, but also His purpose for me. He means me to be like that and He knows I can so become. It is not for me to reply that circumstances hinder me from doing this or becoming that; that I can never be like so-and-so. It is not a comparative question; there is no general standard against which I am to measure my growth. It is a purely personal matter relating just to myself. I may have a smaller sphere, so I think, within which to grow than some other people; one man receives ten talents, another five, another one. But there is possible for me what would be my own 100-per-cent. fulfilment of spiritual efficiency, and that is all that need concern me.

God sees me as a 100-per-cent. man. The picture that I habitually allow to control my life is of a mere 25-per-cent. man or less. His "picture" of me is the truth; my picture does not fit it, does not "correspond to it." It is therefore a false picture, a "false claim" upon me. Most of those of us who call ourselves Christians have much to learn from Christian Science along these lines, but to go so far does not involve us in other difficulties which arise as soon as we deny the existence of evil.

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What is mistaken is our common over-valuation of the power of evil. My 25-per-cent. picture is false, not because the evil in my life is non-existent, but because my estimate of its strength and my under-valuation of God's power in me is a wholly false picture of the proportion of evil and good within me.

In its practical application a Christian's Faith is his acceptance of the true picture of himself, with the determination to live by it. The speculative question of the possibility of actually living out this full 100-per-cent. conception of ourselves need not detain us. Ninety per cent. would be some achievement and far beyond the present aim of many of us. The transformation that takes place in a man's life when he accepts God's view of himself is often nothing short of miraculous. This adjective is used deliberately. The word miracle, in serious conversation, is generally provocative of discussion which is focussed almost exclusively on miracle in the material world. Anyone who doubts this may yet perhaps agree after considering what would be the probable result of a simple test now to be described.

Supposing that one hundred not wholly ignorant people out of any church (or out of any theatre) were gathered together for the purpose of the test, and were asked honestly to give their very first thought suggested by the words "miracle of Jesus Christ." (This is the test by "association of ideas," the question being "What is the idea you first associate with the words 'miracle of Jesus Christ?'") Ninety-nine of them, often the whole hundred,

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would give some such answer as "Bodily resurrection," "Walking on the sea," "Miracle of healing." The word miracle would suggest at once a wonder that could be seen; something, alleged to have taken place, which appealed to and, if true, was apprehended through the physical senses. Very seldom would anyone reply: "The first thing I thought of was Jesus telling the paralytic his sins were forgiven," or "The first thing I thought of was the miracle of the perfect character of Jesus Christ."

Again, if the test words were "Modern miracle," most of the hundred would at once think "Wireless" or " Lourdes " or " Coué " or " Spiritual Healing." Those last two words themselves are a depressing illustration of the way in which even those who have a profound conviction that God's Power is still alive in the Church to perform wonders, confine the application of that conviction to the cure of physical sickness. To the majority of congregations "Spiritual Healing" means the possible cure (in which they may or may not believe) of anything from a sick headache to a malignant tumour. Anyone claiming to exercise the power of healing by faith will be invited to cure physical sickness by a hundred people and to cure moral sickness by one person—perhaps.¹ Yet moral sickness of one kind or another is even more prevalent than physical sickness. In the cure of the latter we are interested because it

¹ During a recent Healing Mission conducted by Mr. Hickson some newspapers reported as of special interest that prayers had been offered for the recovery of a man from habitual ill-temper.

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hurts. The former does even more injury to life and is often the immediate or ultimate cause of bodily illness, but the injury done by it is often unseen and is not always felt by the person who commits it. We make the mistake of supposing that if we haven't a snuffle in the nose or a pain near the diaphragm we are necessarily all right. Physically it is possible that we are, and our bodily health is what chiefly concerns us.

Nevertheless the mistake is serious. The moral state of a man influencing his mental outlook has a bearing on his physical well-being now or as it may become in the future. Viewed in the mass in quite a different way the connection is more obvious. Given a real moral concern in the general public for the prevention and cure of disease, medical research would be sufficiently endowed to achieve the defeat of some diseases altogether. Given a better spirit of co-operation and a more widespread moral indignation about housing conditions, their improvement would result in a great decrease of the mortality in tuberculosis. Moreover venereal diseases, some of the most common, destructive and nauseating diseases, are directly attributable to a low standard of sexual morality.

The paralytic, already mentioned, whom Jesus cured must clearly have undergone a "change of heart" before the healer could assure him of forgiveness and work the cure of his body which was the result.¹ If we could effect this change of heart in all mankind, we should rid the world very quickly of a large proportion of its suffering.

¹ See also p. 166.

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But it is not on those grounds that the present chapter is written. The intention is rather to oppose this concentration of interest in the relief of physical suffering alone, and to widen the significance of the term "Faith-Healing" to include, and include as of the first importance for its own sake, the cure of moral weakness and the development of personality. It is not easy to succeed in this attempt, because, as has been noted, most people have a much greater interest in the welfare of their bodies than of their souls. The subject will be treated not so much in a negative discussion of the cure of weakness of character, but more positively in considering the great latent possibilities of spiritual achievement as yet undeveloped in a man because morally he thinks he is respectable or even good, and physically feels quite fit.

This moral and spiritual development, this change of heart, when it occurs is just as wonderful as any other "miracle." A few years ago a wise old man, who was also humble and good, was talking to me about miracles in the Bible. His standpoint about them was modernist; they did not, he admitted, count so much with him as with many people. And then he suddenly talked as follows, though I cannot recall his exact words: "But I believe in the power of God to perform miracles. Have not I seen and known the greatest in my own life? I look back forty years or more and I see myself almost utterly selfish, out simply for a good time, hard, almost cruel. And then I remember the change,—not only the desire but the ability to be all that which up till then I had not been. Tenderness replaced

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hardness and love selfishness. I am not yet a saint, but I have in my lifetime experienced a change of heart for which quite deliberately I have no other words than a miracle wrought by the Grace of God."

Some of us have had the very great privilege of hearing the same kind of story from many people. Out of many one other remains vividly in my own mind. The man was of exceptional brilliance intellectually; he had almost exhausted the possibilities of theological speculation; his life, though not morally bad, was utterly without religion. So at least he thought, for later he admitted that things must have been going on in him which he did not mark. His own conscious experience of the change was that it came about within a few minutes. The change was complete, complete at any rate in the sense that he has never gone back on it. It has been permanent. From that moment sin's power over him was broken. He had his struggles, but he had found a power that was strong enough to be sufficient for all his needs.

To suppose that modern psychology has entirely explained away that type of experience is quite erroneous. Nor is it confined to highly emotional people, nor yet again to an old-fashioned ranting type of Christianity (which is sometimes supposed, just as mistakenly, to be merely comic). The thing is happening every day and with all types of people. Gradually or suddenly, each in a way not quite like the way in which any other single person has made the discovery, they find the secret of power in Jesus Christ in God. These experiences are not

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generally known nor talked about; they are not good copy for the Press. That is not the fault of the Press, whose chief business apparently is to supply the public with news about the things in which the public is, or is likely to be, interested. The public is interested in Couéism and not in the Holy Spirit.

From the Christian side there is no explanation of these experiences which would satisfy those who do not believe in the power of God, which we call His Spirit. Some of us who do so believe are not content to say of the moral miracle, "It is the work of the Holy Spirit," and to leave it at that. We do not understand nor expect to understand all, but it is possible to find an orderliness in the workings of the Holy Spirit and some of the laws of our being through which He works. Such is the law of suggestion associated with the name of Emile Coué. He may have developed the theory and practice of it beyond his predecessors, but the power of suggestion and the suggestibility of human beings are well-established facts which do not owe their origin to the twentieth century.

In the last few years there has been a considerable output of literature, not only on suggestion itself but on its place in the prayer and faith of the Christian. Some knowledge of it is therefore assumed here, and only one illustration will now be given. Poppy, a toddler of some few summers, is to be taken her first railway-journey and looks forward to it with intense joy. During the last stages of packing her aunt, with our common failure to estimate the intelligence of the child, says, within

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her hearing: "And Poppy's certain to be sick in the train." Up to that moment there had been nothing whatever to associate sickness with railway-journeys in the mind of the child, but the association proceeds now from the mouth of one of these Olympic persons of infinite age who know everything. The suggestion of sickness becomes a fixed idea. Poppy's faith in her aunt is prodigious. The expected happens. Poppy will not disappoint, and sick in the train she will certainly be. But the aunt has not yet done her worst. "Don't sit there, Poppy child," she says, "with your back to the engine. You'll have a headache if you do. I always have one, and so does your poor dear mother."

Thirty years later Poppy, a martyr to *mal-de-train* as a result, is busy binding the chains of it upon the next generation. I do not mean to imply that there is no other explanation of headache in the train than that. The motion of the train has something to do with it. But the expectation held by the traveller either of a headache or of freedom from it predisposes her (or him) to be victimized by that motion or to adapt herself to it. The surrender or the adaptation is largely unconscious. In Poppy's case it is effected by the suggestion accepted in blind trust and so becoming part of the child's outlook upon life. The mental picture which she has of herself travelling is of "someone sitting with her back to the engine and afflicted with headache." Each time the picture is realized in fact, the faith in its inevitability becomes stronger. To fight against it is often simply to exaggerate this

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sense of inevitability. Strength of will may enable the victim to read or work in the train in spite of the headache, but sheer determination cannot often make the headache cease to be.

The Coué method is to treat the headache as the result of a false picture, and to substitute for it in the sufferer's mind a true picture; the picture of a person perfectly capable of travelling in any position in a train (except perhaps upside down) without any uncomfortable sensations. The new suggestion is calculated to be as effective in realizing itself for good, as the old one used to be for evil. As the evil suggestion first slipped into the mind casually and without effort so must the good suggestion. Hence the technique of auto-suggestion with its mechanical repetition of a formula such as "Day by day in every way I become better and better."¹ For many a doctor's "It's only imagination;" or, "It's only nerves; get plenty of fresh air and don't worry," Coué substitutes detailed positive instruction in the very difficult art of ceasing to worry. Much in the same way a man will hear only the call, "Repent, come to church, pray, have faith, and you will be all right," when he needs detailed explanation of how exactly to pray, how exactly to apply his faith. Not all need this explanation, but many who do need it are turning in vain from church to find, thankfully, some of the help they need, with God left out, in lectures or books of psychology.

It has already been said that existing books deal with the application of the technique of auto-

¹ "The Theory and Practice of Auto-Suggestion," Brooks.

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suggestion to the life of prayer and the use to which we put faith in God.¹ To these books the reader must be referred. There are, however, certain outstanding objections to be met, and on the score of these objections many people distrust or deride the use of religious auto-suggestion altogether.

It is alleged that the method is not applicable to the sphere of moral conduct, and that Coué himself does not so apply it. But, in answer to questions, Coué has repeatedly and emphatically stated that it can and should be used in that way. If he does not appear to do so himself very much, one might suppose that he does not consider it his business or vocation. But even if he is as ready to help people to improve their characters as to heal their bodies, he is not allowed much opportunity according to accounts of his work published in the Press or elsewhere. During his visits to England people tumbled over each other in their efforts to secure his help for their own or their friends' physical ailments. A very large number of people, mildly interested in what they called "the higher thought," and with nothing of any serious import to occupy their time, dogged his footsteps with no particular intention except to be able to talk "Coué" afterwards and to murmur "So interesting; such a dear!" Those, if any, who sought the little Frenchman's help for the cure of ill-temper or the development of the moral virtues, can barely have seen him for dust. But it is not likely that many tried.

¹ "Coué and his Gospel of Health," the Dean of Chester; "Christianity and Auto-Suggestion," Brooks and Charles.

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The truth is that in spite of people's apparent opinion that the reformation of character, a "change of heart," is not nearly so marvellous a work of faith as the cure of a pain in the knee, they are yet some degrees less hopeless about the cure of their knees than of their characters. There is a curious perversity in this. Or, as has already been shown, the bad knee hurts more. For there is no reason why ordinarily the mechanism of the mind which is used through suggestion to strengthen the body should not also be used to develop strength of character. The root of the objection is probably the suspicion that in practice it does not work. There are grounds for this suspicion in the experience of many people whose hope in the power of God has been rekindled by teaching on auto-suggestion, who have tried the combination in vain and relapsed into a state of helplessness more serious than they would have encountered if they had never heard of suggestion at all.

For such failures there are reasons which do not invalidate auto-suggestion in the religious exercises of those who will avoid one of a variety of mistakes which have been very common. One mistake is to treat by this method alone moral infirmities which are in part the symptoms or the results of mental or physical disease. The line between moral and mental disease, and between the latter and organic disease of the body can often be drawn only by the physician. Where there is any doubt the right doctor should be consulted. To rely on religious suggestion instead of medical advice in such cases is to court failure. I do not in this

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prejudge the claims of those who set out to cure physical disease through religious faith, but even with them the tendency to-day is towards greater co-operation with the medical profession, so that all the arts of healing may unite to promote a cure. But so far only certain people in the Church are the channel for this special gift of healing through faith by the laying-on of hands. Those healers are not here considered; we are taking the case of the ordinary Christian who should consult a doctor if he needs one. If he would consult one because he had a persistent pain in the body he is foolish not to go to one for what his friends describe as "only nerves." Nervous illness may be just as much illness as bodily suffering. Nor is it anything to be particularly ashamed of. The stigma resting on mental and nervous disease, which holds back many people from consulting a doctor as soon as they should, is as stupid as it is cruel.

There are, however, many cases of moral weakness which do not demand the slightest medical attention yet do not seem to yield to religious suggestion. A common mistake is to use a suggestion narrowly applied to the particular trouble, instead of a general suggestion of such inclusiveness that it will affect realms of our mind where we cannot otherwise penetrate. Our own judgment of what chiefly matters is not necessarily God's; we may be conscience-stricken and over-fussy about some besetting sin, and become so concentrated upon that alone that we fail to notice other departments of life in which we never consider the standard of Jesus

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at all. As long as our standard is low in other things our besetting sin will not be removed.

In no department of life is this mistake more usual than in the struggle against sexual sin of any kind, and in nothing else is this exclusive concentration more undesirable. If the combatant would remove some of his attention from that subject and give the same to his conceit or general wilfulness, his meanness, ill-temper, selfish ambition, or insincerity with himself—(whichever of these are his other faults)—then the central citadel, in which he was once chiefly interested, would more quickly fall by flank-attack. The Christian character is not a matter of defeating one vice or of acquiring one virtue.

Another mistake made, again particularly in dealing with sexual difficulties, but also more generally, is to use a negative suggestion. Most writers on the subject make the same recommendation but the mistake persists. If each sin has not its opposite virtue, at any rate sin itself is the neglect, misuse, perversion or other waste of some quality, instinct, or faculty which in itself is perfectly right. The right employment of this must be sought. "Learn to do well" is more important than "Cease to do evil," because the former is the whole and includes the latter which is only the part. We do not need to cram our subconscious minds with inhibitions against evil, but rather with declarations of good which may translate themselves into the experience of positive developments towards the ideal.

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Probably the commonest explanation of the alleged uselessness of religious auto-suggestion is that a man applies the remedy to a symptom and not to the root cause. Examining his life in part by the test of efficiency, suggested in the first chapter, he selects casual dealing and forgetfulness as a minor fault, and instantly applies his prayers and perhaps uses suggestion to rid himself of this weakness. He is quite right in supposing that forgetfulness—what some might consider only a mental weakness—must be regarded by himself as a moral flaw, a weakness which is contrary to the will of God for him and can with God's help be remedied. But he is wrong if he does not push his enquiry further and discover what is the exact moral element in this failure in executive capacity. He does not "seek the ground of his heart" and try if there be "any way of wickedness" in him. He applies his faith to a surface fault, and improves it perhaps for a time, but he will not rid himself of it if it springs from an underlying defect which he is not trying to remove as well. The following explanation might fit his condition; all cases of forgetfulness cannot of course be covered by it, but it is typical of many if not of the majority.

On examination he finds that his most persistent line of forgetfulness touches his correspondence. He postpones or forgets the answer to letters, and when he answers sometimes forgets to post. Supposing him to be an orderly person and not too overworked to be able to deal with his correspondence punctually, he cannot honestly attribute the fault to mere slovenliness or habitual procrastina-

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tion. He comes to the conclusion that it is chiefly one type of letter which is the victim of this delay; the analysis of a recent incident gives him the clue. He has just discovered a letter written three days ago still unposted on his table or in his pocket, and by questioning himself about it he recalls the following details. A fortnight previously he received an invitation to make a speech or do some other bit of extra work away from his home three months ahead. He did not, for some reason or mixed reasons, want to accept; for the moment the invitation was just put aside. A week later he received a postcard asking for an answer. Lugubriously he looked for the first letter and found that it had "hidden itself away" in the same sort of way in which some people's unpaid bills have a habit of "hiding themselves." He then meditated different possible reasons he might advance for refusing the invitation, decided against them on the ground that he could not honestly commit himself to any of them, and wrote a letter of acceptance in the conventional "great pleasure" phraseology. And as he stamped the letter some such thought as this passed through his mind: "Well, three months is a long time ahead and I daresay something will happen before then to prevent me going."

That "suggestion" is much more nearly the expression of his inmost desire than the letter he has just written. But what is consciously nothing more than a vain hope is accepted subconsciously as an intention, and immediately starts translating itself into action, affecting his conduct through a

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purely automatic mechanism of the mind. He is ultimately responsible because he has pressed the button which sets the machinery going, and "out of the abundance of his heart" he acts, or fails to act. And the very first thing that might prevent his doing that piece of extra work happens—"The letter forgets to get posted." As soon as the man sees what has happened he knows what he is up against in this particular instance. It is not a failing memory; that part of the business is sufficiently explained. He is up against the dislike of leaving home, the discomforts of winter-travelling, the sacrifice of money and time, the lack of interest in foreign missions or in whatever cause was asking his help, the pride that did not consider the audience sufficiently big or important—he is up against the reason or reasons which made him not want to go. He has now to ask himself—what place has that kind of reason in the whole structure of his character and outlook? There is within him a conflict of desires that has not been faced out nor settled right, and on the shifting foundation of that major indecision all manner of minor weaknesses and inconsistencies flourish. Now that he knows himself better he knows how to use prayer, and he will find that neither that nor religious auto-suggestion will fail.

It is only if the forgetfulness is chronic and he can find for it no reason of the kind suggested that he need suspect that there is a conflict or repression so deeply hidden in his "unconscious" as to need skilled elucidation. If he so decides he will be wise not to attempt amateur psycho-analysis, with

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or without the assistance of his friends, but to entrust himself to the right medical adviser. It has been most sensibly said that psycho-analysis starts where self-examination ends.

But self-examination should be carried much further than many Christian people generally take it. The average devotional book handed out to us at the time of Confirmation or as a guide to us in daily prayer does not encourage us to do more than probe the surface. The scheme of suggested questions may be based on the ten commandments or in some other form, but they are equally superficial. On the sixth commandment—"Thou shalt do no murder"—the self-examiner is advised to ask such questions as "Have I borne a grudge against anyone? Is there anyone whom I hate?" On the ninth commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," are suggested "Have I been strictly truthful? Have I suppressed the truth? Have I allowed wrong impressions to be made? Have I excused myself at the expense of others? Have I been deceitful by word or act?" The self-examiner is left to suppose that having discovered a sin in answer to one of these questions he may proceed to the next; whereas he should be led to examine below the surface of what he has already discovered.

For instance, the question might be opened up in the following way: "*Have I borne a grudge against anyone?*" "If so, for how long? When did it start? Was that the first time I felt uncharitably towards him? What exactly had he done to offend me? Why exactly did it offend me? Did

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it injure me materially or only touch my pride? In either case, was my resentment reasonably justifiable? If not, what exactly is it that has made me nurse this grievance so long? Am I quite sure that I had no prejudice against him before he offended me? Am I over-sensitive, too ready to suspect evil? If so, why?" All these secondary questions need not be printed immediately under the main question. Each commandment would have its two or three main leading questions, so that the preliminary examination would be comparatively brief. The self-examiner would note unfavourable answers and having completed the enquiry on the commandments or some of them, would then turn to another part of the book where there would be the further questions, supplementing the leading questions to which the first answers had been unsatisfactory. It would be through these groups of more detailed questions or suggestions that the real examination would take place. Anything so thorough would not be required often; to do it once or twice to start with, and afterwards only from time to time, would ensure a self-knowledge that would become a permanent factor in a man's spiritual progress.

Meanwhile in the absence of devotional books to supply this kind of assistance, we must use such knowledge of psychology as we possess, and the example of the forgetful man already quoted serves to illustrate what self-examination should really mean for the Christian and to indicate a method which we can adapt to our own needs. It illustrates not only the reason of much failure of auto-

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suggestion used as a short-cut, but also the truth of Christ's teaching that what matters is what a man really is at heart. Other answers to the objection that religious auto-suggestion does not work are best met in connection with the other objection that for Christians the practice is not right. This will now be considered.

CHAPTER V
THE WILL AND THE IMAGINATION

CHAPTER V

THE WILL AND THE IMAGINATION

RELIGIOUS auto-suggestion fails to work sometimes for reasons which are religious rather than psychological. God is perhaps regarded as a power to be used, when required, for selfish ends; His name is to be fitted into a formula just in order to make a mechanical trick succeed. Even if a thorough self-examination has taken place, it has been undertaken as a matter of psychological advisability, already described, not also in order to lead to the discovery of the real grounds of offences against God. So the stages of penitence and assurance of forgiveness are just skipped over. The psychology of the business is not even sound and the Christianity of it is thoroughly bad.

It may be urged that no desire for moral improvement can be merely selfish. But it may be so. A man may be influenced by shame that others should know his weakness; he may see the connection between weakness of character and loss of efficiency in daily work. He may not be actuated by the highest motive of all, the desire to be at his very best in the service of God in order that God's will may be done through him. We can hardly expect to find religious auto-suggestion effective if we do not look on it as part of an act of reconsecration.

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Yet again it is fatally easy to yield to the temptation to use suggestion and drop prayer. How could one then expect to succeed?

This should count as some answer to objections to the practice on the part of those who declare that it is wrong. For it is not to be substituted for prayer nor for any of the stages of spiritual progress directed by the Church; for the Christian it would then become wrong. But it gives point to the psychological value of those directions, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Nor, if those directions are followed, can it be dismissed as unworthy for the Christian on the score that it savours of magic or trickery. Yet many of us in things of greater or less importance are bound by the delusion, self-imposed or caught from our environment, that we have this handicap, or that limitation; that we are no good at one thing, or cannot rise to another—slaves indeed to a magic that is not of God.

Indeed, religion as the background and source of the practice of auto-suggestion may alone make it both safe and effective in the sphere of moral character. There has been more than one man who has used auto-suggestion alone to cure himself of shyness, hesitation, lack of the right kind of self-confidence, or of sense of inferiority. Twice a day for weeks on end before dropping to sleep and on first getting up in the morning, he has faithfully repeated to himself twenty times over some such formula as "Day by day in every way I become a more and more perfectly splendid fellow."

The recipe works gloriously (perhaps); such a man has been known to remedy his prevailing weak-

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ness to a wonderful extent. He becomes self-reliant, decisive instead of hesitating, full of initiative and enterprise. So far so good. Meanwhile he is quickly losing his friends. He has become dictatorial, impatient of contradiction, conceited and offensive. This is not surprising. He has treated his original failing as a purely mental phenomenon, which he supposed could be remedied by a proper use of the mechanism of the mind. He has disregarded the possibility that his previous failure was as much moral as anything else. Thus while he plays a game of auto-suggestion with himself which is successful enough as far as his mind is concerned, his moral character is flopping about all over the place. But this is not the fault of auto-suggestion. And no one who comes to the practice of it after self-examination, penitence, confession and forgiveness, according to the scheme of Christian progress, need fear that he will damage his moral character as a result. For the practice, for a Christian, is grounded in a belief, not in his own powers alone, but in the power of God working through him.

The two most serious objections have still to be faced. The first is that the whole theory and practice of auto-suggestion even with a Christian background degrades the will from its primary place; and that unless the will stands first the whole conception of the Christian's life as one of necessary struggle, effort, and self-discipline falls to the ground. It should be noticed that Christianity can be made so to appear from a perusal of the Gospels without any reference to auto-suggestion

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at all. There is at least as much in the teaching and example of Jesus on faith and what will result from it as there is about conscious effort. Though discipleship figures prominently in the Epistles as a fight and a struggle, there is also much about faith, much on the lines of "Not I but Christ in me."

The Church has always and easily avoided the mistake of regarding these two as contradictory, though at different periods one may have received undue emphasis at the cost of the other. Anyone is entitled to hold the opinion, for instance, that, since the war, discipleship in the individual and in the Church has been a matter of gallant and strenuous effort rather than of faith. At one time it may have appeared to some as if there were a risk of the pendulum swinging to the other extreme, as a result of the wide advertisement of the doctrines of M. Coué. These pages are written in the belief not only that there is now very little risk of that happening, but that on the contrary, there is as much need as ever for a reiterated insistence upon faith in the power outside ourselves, if our own efforts for righteousness are to succeed. The world and the Church in the world needs above all else faithful and incessant preaching of the gospel or good news of supernatural power.

The objection we are considering arises from the formula in Baudouin's book,¹ "Where the will and the imagination are at variance the imagination invariably gains the day." Faith, as we have seen, is in the realm of the imagination, so that, from the Christian point of view, this is equivalent to

¹ "Suggestion and Auto-Suggestion," Allen and Unwin.

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saying, "Give up trying and believe instead." This would be at once to displace the effort of the will from its position of first importance in Christian discipleship. For what we have always supposed that as disciples of our Lord we must do is to *try* hard the whole time, *believing* that if we do so His grace will be sufficient for us.

Advocates of auto-suggestion, including, I believe, Coué himself, admit that in the formula just quoted there is, between "will" and "belief," a distinction which is unreal. For no man wills the impossible. To will to do a certain thing implies the belief that that thing can be done. Strictly speaking there can be no contradiction between will and belief. One includes the other. But "speaking strictly" in this matter is also "speaking ideally," and we are not most of us ideal persons. If my personality were perfectly proportioned and completely harmonized my will to do anything would include my belief in my capacity to do it. Unfortunately it is true that I am often in danger of making an effort which I call "desperate" to reform my character in some respect, while at the same time doubting whether I shall succeed. Under such circumstances the Baudouin formula fits the result. My will to do a thing will be thwarted by my lack of faith in myself (or God). And this is surely the teaching of Christianity. Peter tried so very hard to walk on the sea—"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"¹

In the Christian's use of auto-suggestion the will and the imagination must be harmonized; he then

¹ St. Matt. xiv.

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lives by faith, and yet the will enters at every stage. We have already seen how, if success is to be assured, the will must dominate the situation from the start. To use auto-suggestion at all (or faith) implies a decision to do so; that is a matter of will. The decision must be sincere. The motive must be unselfish, the desire to serve God and mankind. The cost must be counted. The nearer a man draws to God through faith the greater may be the demands made upon his effort and self-sacrifice. Is he prepared to meet these demands, to make further efforts, now unknown? He is. In all this preliminary stage, in each act of decisive choice, the man's will is engaged and is absolutely primary. He decides to return to God in humble reliance upon God's mercy and power, with a particular intention, deliberately calculated.

In the next steps of preparation, already mentioned, self-examination, penitence, confession, whether to God or man, the same decisive intention is continually at work, and considerable effort and painstaking are required; the will dominates the situation. Perseverance and concentration, again in the sphere of the will, are needed in prayer. Now at last, but also most certainly, must the disciple, without relaxing his efforts, rely more and more upon the power of God to make his efforts successful in the future. At the moment of temptation and stress he will try his hardest, and in between those periods he will keep himself spiritually fit by self-discipline, but his attitude of mind must be one of serenity and confidence.

Many people who have thus approached prayer

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along the right road find that this attitude of mind comes naturally to them. They need no special help. They can afford to be entirely ignorant that there exists a theory of suggestion because, though they do not call it by that name, they have been following out a method which is psychologically correct. The religious use of auto-suggestion is only recommended at all for those who cannot and do not acquire, by the same method, the same attitude of mind; who, though at bottom they believe, are inclined at critical times to anticipate the worst, to doubt their own capacity, even with God's help, to be at their best. This doubt robs their efforts of the serene confidence in God which should give them further strength. In desperation they struggle on, and the very anxiety of their struggle only deepens the doubt in their mind. They are in a vicious circle from which they can hardly escape. They are perhaps genuinely past the point at which they can exercise control over that expectation of failure.

The doubts rise into their consciousness from a subterranean region of the mind which normally they feel unable to regulate. Auto-suggestion is a method of reaching that subconscious territory, so that the ideas which emerge spontaneously or automatically from it may be ideas of love and strength and not of fear and failure. It is designed to do more than this; it can succeed in planting in the subconscious mind ideas which will translate themselves into action almost without conscious thought. For that is how the really faithful Christian lives; he is not always making deliberate

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calls on the faith that is in him. On many occasions he may do so, but the fact that he has the root of the matter at the heart and centre of his being renders this often unnecessary. His faithful attitude of mind, the whole mind, expresses itself naturally in his thoughts and actions.

Apart from those who need medical advice, auto-suggestion should be regarded even by those who genuinely need it as a temporary expedient designed to help in securing this permanent attitude of mind. Coué has admitted that he seldom, if ever, employs it himself. For some Christians it, or something akin to it, is a practical necessity, until perfect love has cast out fear, and until out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh and the life is lived. Ideally it may be preferable not to need religious auto-suggestion at all, nor to employ it even for a time. But, reverently approached, it is, as has been described elsewhere, very similar to religious meditation, and those who are conscious of a low output of spiritual efficiency will be stopped by pride alone from developing greater powers in any legitimate way. That religious auto-suggestion is a legitimate use of faith through the mechanism of the mind even in relation to the efforts of the will can best be indicated by an illustration.

Suppose the impossible, but suppose that there be two athletes, twin-brothers, completely identical in physical powers and development, and that on a given date many weeks ahead they are to run against each other. Let us suppose again that they are both moved by an equally strong determination

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to win. In both the will is deeply engaged from the start. They know perfectly well that their entry for the race lays upon them the necessity to go into strict training with all the self-discipline involved. They count the cost and decide to enter. Having done so the intention must never be relaxed. Favourite foods must be relinquished and less palatable things eaten; strict hours must be kept for rising and going to bed. They must "live hardly" and self-discipline must be continuous; no slacking is possible. And if success in the race is for the time being the chief aim in life, it must be pursued with single-minded concentration, and all else must be subordinated to it.

Given the same concentration of will and identical staying-powers and, barring mere ill-luck to one brother or the other, the race will inevitably result in a dead-heat. That would be dull. Let us make one of them win. The first waking thoughts of B are these: "What have I got hanging over me to-day? Oh, yes, the race. I wish it were over. I hope I shall feel fit. I wonder if I'm a bit over-trained. I'm not quite sure I'm feeling at my best." Doubt, almost fear.

Now it is possible to reason with these fears. In themselves they are natural enough; they are a form of nervous tension, and no person who is at all imaginative will be wholly free from them under such circumstances. H. M. Abrahams, the Cambridge and Olympic athlete, has written on the subject: "Perfect running is the harmonious co-operation of mind and body, and it may well be that this is more difficult to achieve in an edu-

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cated and imaginative person than in one who lacks intellectual and imaginative development." Let us suppose that B does reason with these fears which on analysis, probably, prove to be the fear (1) of making a fool of himself; (2) of failing to realize the opinion he has of his own capabilities. He meets these objections successfully and defeats them. This does not mean that nervousness will entirely leave him until the pistol is fired. That most of us produce better achievement when nervously keyed up is probably true. Certainly the public speaker who after years of practice never rises to address a large audience without a sense of not wholly pleasurable excitement regards it as an asset. He will be more sensitive of his audience, of the crowd-mind he is trying to influence. So is the runner "put on his mettle."

Nervousness of this character does not amount to fear or doubt. B has disposed of the two latter; no sooner did he discover their existence in his mind as weakening suggestions than he challenged and reversed them. A, on the other hand, awakes with the same ideas in his mind and either allows them to remain unchallenged or reasons with them unsuccessfully. He continues to be obsessed by the fear of making a fool of himself, or he continues to mistrust his own capabilities. For the race itself we must assume equal concentration of purpose in both runners, equal conscious output of physical effort—and B will win. If it is the hundred yards he will win by, perhaps, the barest margin. If it is the three miles he will win very obviously and with less distress than A.

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It has been argued against my unproven and unproveable assumption of a victory for B that A's very fears will spur him on and that by sheer determination he will defeat them. Yes, being an athlete, he will force himself to defeat his fears when the time comes, but he will not defeat B for he is running with a brake on him, however slight. It has been said that the best results in athletics are produced by the complete harmony of body and mind, all the muscles acting in perfect rhythm. This harmony and rhythm may be upset, I am told, by three different things: (1) Lack of physical training. (2) Lack of specialized training, *i.e.*, insufficient practice in the art of athletics. (3) Non-co-operation of mind caused through fear or worry.

It is in this third matter only that A fails, but it is sufficient to lose him the race. The suggestion of doubt and fear which he did not reverse translates itself into action. He will get off the mark late, or use an error of judgment in tactics or turn his head at a critical moment. Or his body, rather than his mind, will be affected in ways which he cannot know, and which would not be apparent to anyone else. B, on the other hand, will suffer from no self-imposed limitations and will realize in action the best which he confidently expects from himself.¹

Before applying the illustration to the religious sphere I would press home the argument by one more example, and urge that this particular re-

¹ In arranging this illustration I am indebted for valuable criticism to H. M. Abrahams.

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lationship between the will and the imagination is really a common-place. Some time ago I was talking to the headmaster of an English public school a week or so before the school-team entered upon its most important annual inter-school fixture. He told me that for years the match had been drawn in favour of their opponents, or, more commonly, had resulted in the overwhelming defeat of his own school. "Last year," he went on, "we had admittedly the better team of the two, but we lost. This year we shall put into the field the best team we have had within living memory. But the boys have a sense of fatality about this match; they are over-anxious, *and try too hard. If only they would play naturally as they do in their other matches they could not help winning.*"

In the moral and spiritual sphere it is, even more notably than in games, the attitude of mind, the underlying confidence or the absence of it that tells. To recommend the use of religious auto-suggestion for some people on occasions in order that they may cultivate this underlying confidence is not to degrade the will from its place of primary responsibility. There is no magic in our religion which may be employed to save us taking infinite pains, to excuse ourselves self-discipline and concentration of purpose. But that these may have the cent. per cent. effectiveness which they deserve they must spring from a foundation of serene and secure trust in the resistless power of God Himself. It is this power, made available in part through our own belief in it, that will crown our efforts with success. It is remarkable that it should be

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necessary to say so much about what is so plainly laid down in the New Testament, but the hostility towards auto-suggestion arising from the anxiety lest through it self-discipline and moral effort should be depreciated had to be met. Nor is it really a practical question whether faith or effort matter most in the Christian life. Both matter, and neither must be sacrificed for the other, but a proper proportion must be kept between the two.

The last principal objection to auto-suggestion remains to be faced, and it will be treated separately, though it is in part a conglomeration of the objections already described. It springs from the natural dislike of an honest person to state as a fact what he feels to be untrue. To repeat to himself such sentences as "I am a more faithful disciple," "Day by day I become more as God would have me be," seems almost blasphemously untrue, and an insincerity deliberately concocted in the acknowledged presence of God. One way of disposing of this difficulty would be to employ statements which do not so directly challenge this sense of contradiction: "Perfect love casteth out fear." "Thy Grace is sufficient for me." "The Lord is my light and my Salvation." To hold such a thought in mind even by the merest parrot-like repetition—(and that is the technique of auto-suggestion)—would be to imbue the subconscious mind with material which, translating itself into action, would make better and more efficient disciples of many of us.

But a directly personal statement is likely to be more effective. Even if this is not admitted it

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should be obvious that the proposal just made is, in fact, an evasion of the objection that has been quoted. It cannot be evaded. The difficulty must be faced squarely and admitted to be final if it cannot be disposed of. There is, however, a completely satisfactory answer to it, and this falls naturally into two parts though they are both the same answer.

At the beginning of the third chapter of this book we approached the application of auto-suggestion to religion by a consideration of "God's picture of us." I tried to show that the phrase should suggest to us good in the first place rather than evil. However ugly I have made my character, however shaky in following the true purpose of my life, I am sure that God looks on me as good and strong and beautiful. It is only by virtue of His knowledge of me as such that I ever display in my life symptoms of goodness, strength or beauty. And so long as I keep before me that vision of God's knowledge of me, better than my knowledge of myself, so long may I hope more and more to be as He sees me. This side of the grave I can only know myself in part, and cannot know myself entirely, for good or evil, as I am known by Him. But my understanding of the Incarnation, my belief in the endurance of the spiritual beyond what we call death, compels me to admit within myself qualities and powers which it is no conceit nor falsehood to declare.

The honesty of such a statement to myself depends entirely on the steps, already mentioned more than once, by which alone I should arrive

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at it. In particular, if I am not perfectly certain that I am forgiven for the past, if I have not what in theological language is called the "Grace of Forgiveness," I cannot honestly use religious auto-suggestion. But if I am forgiven, if I am washed whiter than snow, if God has put away my sins so that He remembers them no more, His picture of me as good and strong and beautiful is true and *my picture of myself as anything else but that is a false picture.*

The second part of the answer takes us to the root and heart of religious faith in daily life. God's knowledge of me at my best is also His purpose for me. Our prayers for moral and spiritual improvement and development are the prayers about which we may be completely assured, without any doubt, that they are in accordance with His will. If therefore self-examined, confessed and forgiven, I have prayed eagerly and persistently for spiritual gifts I can count on them absolutely. And I can count on them as granted immediately, if not in completeness at any rate in measure sufficient for my immediate needs. This is not the kind of prayer about which we should "expect to find an answer some day." Yet that is how we often treat it; yet the answer to the prayer is so close to us, so much nearer than hands and feet, that we do not recognize it. The man who, having risen from prayer for spiritual gifts, lies down in bed telling himself that he is already better, stronger, nearer God, more like Christ than he was before he claimed forgiveness and before he prayed, is saying to himself no more than is literally true. And if he cannot

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be sure of retaining that belief let him impregnate his whole heart and mind with it by auto-suggestion.

For I am certain that the truth in this matter only becomes a reality to us when we act on it. The most instantaneous way in which we can act upon it is at least to repeat it to ourselves as the glorious and dominating fact in our lives, no longer praying that it *may* be so, but declaring that it *is* so. To wait and see is the attitude of the man, already described, whose faith is static. The man whose faith is *dope* has also been considered. Let us conclude our study of faith in relation to life by considering the man whose faith is dynamic.

He will as soon as possible take some action which embodies his new-found trust. He will soon go beyond the statement to himself that "it is so," however valuable to his own reassurance that statement is. I do not mean that he will rush vain-gloriously into some long-feared encounter with evil, still less that he will try to do things he thought he could not do before merely in order to test and prove the powers that may be his through faith. It is most important that we should have this clear. The type of Christian assurance we are now considering has gone beyond the tentative or experimental stage; tests are not required or, if they are, then what follows here set down would possibly not in fact occur. It will certainly happen that in acting on the assumption of spiritual power a man will prove his conviction to have been sound and will gain still firmer foothold on the rock. But his first action will be taken without a conscious need of any such proof.

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Donald Hankey wrote : " True religion is betting your life that there is a God." That is not only the extreme instance of the Christian adventure, it is the only principle of life for the Christian. The disciple we have in mind will act immediately, even in little things, on the assumption that he has power to act at his best which is God's best for him. Any close communion with God will result in the entry of a new principle into his life. He will not wait to see whether or not when the time of stress and temptation comes upon him, to meet which he has invoked God's aid, that aid is sufficient for his needs, but he will in all things start at once to live out the new principle, applying new reserves of power to every department of his life.

The difference between static and dynamic faith can be fairly explained by two illustrations. A man stands opposite a chasm. It is spanned by a thin plank of narrow width. He develops suddenly or acquires by degrees a certain confidence about the plank and himself. His friend who has put it there assures him that it will bear his weight and that assurance he honestly accepts. He is also confident about himself. He feels he could and would walk across without losing his head or his balance. He has a certain attitude of mind ; he is prepared loyally and trustingly to do certain things. That is like the man of Faith. But the full Christian faith in life means something more than that. It means faith in action—movement, life. The man puts first one foot on the plank and then the other. That is faith in action.

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“Stretch forth thine hand.”¹ “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee . . . arise, and take up thy bed.”² Again and again in the sphere of physical healing our Lord made instant demands upon faith and required its expression in action. Indeed it almost seemed in such cures as if divine power started working only when the individual acted on the assumption that it had already started. The discovery of power within oneself or coming through oneself is like that. God awaits man’s co-operation through the exercise of faith. Coué in his “secular” cures works on exactly the same principle. He interviews a patient and teaches him about auto-suggestion. But he does not stop at that; he is not content to have secured in the patient a certain attitude of mind. That attitude of mind must be translated into action, and he orders the patient to perform, or attempt to perform, something of which before he had believed himself incapable. The static becomes dynamic. The picture becomes a reality.

The second illustration I owe to another, but in what book it occurs I do not know. The man of faith is like a man standing in a completely dark world except for one circle of light round his feet. That is part of the Christian’s faith—though in a dark world, to stand in faith. But it is only part, standing—static. Discipleship means not merely standing in faith, but walking by faith. The man steps out of the circle of light into the darkness that surrounds him. Faith in action—dynamic. And it is a reality. The circle of light follows him,

¹ St. Mark iii.

² St. Mark ii.

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and he walks not in darkness, but in light, ever stepping into darkness, ever followed by the light. This is a picture of what is meant by the statement often made, and as often disregarded, that the faithful disciple, if he will, may have light enough to walk by and strength sufficient for all his needs.

CHAPTER VI
INSTINCT AND IMAGINATION

CHAPTER VI

INSTINCT AND IMAGINATION

IN the first chapter it was indicated that the study of the powers and use of imagination would lead us far. Whether we realize it or not, we think so much in pictures, our memories so often are good or bad according to our ability to recall or make vivid and true pictures, that for practical purposes the study of the mind is largely the study of the imaginative faculty. That fact and the desire to preserve a continuity in the line of thought pursued in this book must be my excuse for a further consideration of it.

The right or wrong use of the mind has effect on or control of the emotions which we experience from the great instincts which dominate our lives. The energy which we put into anything which we do belongs to us because we have some inherited instinct which compels us to do that thing: the instinct to preserve ourselves, to acquire possessions or power for ourselves, to develop and express ourselves, to reproduce ourselves and hand on the gift of life to succeeding generations, to seek companionship and stand well in the regard of our fellow-men, to enquire, to hunt, to discover. Everything that we do owes its accomplishment to the strength of one or other of such instincts.

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Our consciousness of those instincts comes to us not only by the observation of their working in other people and in life as a whole, but also through what we call emotion in ourselves. Curiosity, anger, fear, love, passion, pity, envy, pride—such are the emotions experienced and consciously recognized which are the evidences of the instinctive forces within us. It is interesting to notice that most emotions have two names in our ordinary use of words, one name implying a right and proper, or at least an inevitable feeling, the other describing an exaggerated or less usual, an uncontrolled or unjustifiable feeling: passion and love on the one hand, or lust on the other; self-respect or conceit; anger or fury; pity or contempt; fear or terror. I am naturally curious, or I indulge in morbid inquisitiveness; I am ambitious within legitimate bounds, or I am envious and jealous. I am instinctively afraid, or I abandon myself to a hopeless paralysis of terror.

These various pairs describe emotional experiences differently. The difference in any one pair cannot be exactly contrasted with the difference in another. They are not all equally fair illustrations of the argument. They are, however, sufficiently fair examples to establish the main contention, which is that instinctive energy may be used or abused, regulated or uncontrolled. Thus in their moral aspect instincts may be employed well or ill. Their energies, working unconsciously, or recognized in our experience of emotion, are to the Christian the powers given him by God, and they are in themselves good, because divine. Their

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divinity or "inspiration" varies; even at their highest and best they are not all equally noble, equally productive of good. Yet in differing degrees they are the powers without which we could not live. An example from the instinct of self-preservation working through the emotion of fear will illustrate this point. Because I have that instinct strongly developed, and only because I have it, can I cross either the "Elephant and Castle" in South London or King's Parade in Cambridge at 1.5 p.m. on any day of the week, more particularly on Saturdays, and remain uninjured when I reach the other side. I have not experienced any fear before or during the operation. I am accustomed to it. Self-preservation acts instinctively. But if you deprive me of my instinct of self-preservation in the middle of the crossing you must at the same time telephone for an ambulance, for I shall require it two seconds later, unless I am quite uniquely fortunate.

Supposing, however, that instead of walking in central London I take a taxi, and after sitting in it for three minutes it becomes abundantly clear to me that the driver is drunk, and that the alcohol with which he is afflicted is momentarily affecting him more powerfully. This is not a normal experience for me, and the instinct of self-preservation affects me consciously through the emotion of fear. Frankly I do not like the experience. The sensation of fear is extremely unpleasant, and at last, in order to be rid of it, I use what means I can to pull the driver up, I get out of the taxi and congratulate myself that I have escaped disaster. If

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my own emotional reaction to the experience is confused or obscured by an excess of alcohol, or even as a result of the mere fact that I have taken alcohol in moderation, I may not perhaps suffer from fear. For the time being I have dutch courage and rather enjoy the excitement; the functioning of my instinct of self-preservation is thrown out of gear. My judgment is impaired and I let the driver go on. If he propels his destroyer into a lamp-post and my arteries are severed by broken glass, my freedom from instinctive fear, through alcohol, has been bought at an excessive price.

Thus the emotion of fear coming from the instinct of self-preservation plays a useful and necessary part in the life of man, as God wills that it should. But it is possible for the emotion of fear to play a part in life that bears no just proportion to the instinct of self-preservation. A man so affected becomes "nervous"; he suspects all motorists of alcoholic proclivities and will never cross a main-road if he can help it, because he regards all buses and bicycles as engines of destruction charged with a peculiar animus against himself. He fears "where no fear is." So may fear become worry, and worry fuss, and it is due to a morbid or uncontrolled imagination.

Or again, he may be the victim of fear that is in correct proportion to his instinct of self-preservation itself, but out of proportion to the importance of that instinct in life as a whole. The Christian must deal with this, for he will often be in a position in which the consideration of his own safety or interest should count as of less importance than

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the safety or interest of other people, his family or friends, his "neighbour." He has a perfectly "natural" fear for his own sake, but he must not stop the taxi and escape the thing he fears. For if he did that he would be allowing an emotion to get the better of him and make him shirk his duty. The instinctive desire to protect himself is legitimate; the emotion of fear resulting from that desire is nothing of which he need be ashamed. According to the circumstances he sins only when he indulges that emotion instead of controlling it. Again, in the control of it his imagination will play an important part.

The illustration from fear and self-preservation cannot be applied rigidly and in exact detail to all other emotions and instincts alike, but it is a fair sample. For we must set out from the conviction that our great instincts are God-given and therefore good; and that what we call sin is the neglect or waste or abuse or perversion of that which in itself is perfectly right. People make a great mistake who suppose that this is to whittle away the moral significance of sin or its heinousness as an offence against a God of Love. My conceit is no less offensive to God or man because its root is a self-respect which God implanted in me. Its root is not its cause. Its cause is the devil, or whatever else men may decide to be the origin of evil. But the sin is a malignant growth on to or out of something that ought to be and could be healthy and good, and that is partly what makes sin so horrible.

Thus to explain sin, at any rate in part, is not to lessen the shame or guilt of it. But the theory, if

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agreed, is a further justification of the more hopeful attitude already outlined in this book towards sin as a practical difficulty. It leads us back to God's picture of us as essentially more good than evil, however much evil we may have done. And it can lead us forward to further positive means of meeting our difficulties.

If we were entirely and solely creatures of impulse we should be at the mercy of the instinctive forces within us, and of the emotions which belong to them. But, even apart from conscience, we also have the faculty of reason. As Mr. Studdert-Kennedy has often pointed out, man is inclined to lay almost too much stress on this fact, and to flatter himself that because he is a rational being, he always acts in a rational way. The contrary is often the truth, and, as we have already seen, our reasoning power itself may be often warped or dominated by some instinctive desire, which we attempt to justify by reasons which were not originally the grounds of our actions. But the significance of this common failing can, in its turn, be exaggerated, for we honestly know from our own experience that we are able, if only within limits, to consider and assess calmly enough and to control many of our impulses and inclinations. In so behaving we may be acting in response to yet another instinct, that of the herd, the social instinct, or to a force called by some the religious instinct and said to be more fundamental than any other. That is not the view urged here; and for practical purposes it is not necessary to hold any exact or final theory on the subject.

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The manner in which emotions present themselves to our consciousness is often in the form of mental pictures, and it is in that form that we control or fail to control them. A man who has suffered rudeness, contempt or more serious injury from another commonly encounters one of two experiences. He may seek inward peace by making himself forget the incident. In the course of forgetting he will probably make other people (or things) the innocent objects of the vexation he is trying to bottle up and cannot or will not expend upon the person who aroused it. Occasional sulki-ness or irritability in otherwise good-tempered people is often to be explained in this way, and this is another instance of the necessity of probing our faults below the surface.

On the other hand the man may brood over the injury; he does so by allowing continually to invade his mind a very vivid picture of the scene in which he was humiliated or of possible scenes in the future in which he pictures himself getting his own back. Such mental pictures are evidences of his irritation, and, if indulged and encouraged beyond a certain point, they add fuel to it. Whether or not they are ever at some point an actual relief to irritation, no more and no less, is a difficult question.

It is easy, of course, to say that it is better to swear away sudden or pent-up irritation than to bottle it up, and this policy could be argued from what will be admitted later about the danger or waste caused by emotional repression. Our Lord did not condemn swearing more strongly than He

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condemned lack of love, and it is perhaps slightly less injurious to damn someone with gusto than to harbour irritation against him. But the question is: Are these fair and unavoidable alternatives? For Christians presumably not. The dilemma only presents itself to those who have formed the habit of frequent indulgence in anger, and developed a capacity for it. Anyone can limit his natural tendency to experience this particular emotion, if he takes it in time, especially if he seeks God's help. To fail in this and to claim the right and necessity of a vent in hasty words is not fair argument. The psychological inadvisability of repressing emotional energy does not, as many seem to suppose, free us from the necessity to exercise self-control even if that prove painful.

Apart from the innumerable people who habitually use bad language not as a relief to anything but as a habit, formed like the habits of sheep, from their extreme liability to accept suggestions from the herd—there are some irascible people who seriously claim that swearing makes them better-tempered. It is a dismal confession, and as a generalization I believe it to be wholly false. It is a typical piece of rationalization and self-deception. The most awful anger I have ever seen was directed against myself. During the war, in France, a soldier who was driving a car of which I was the sole occupant nearly caused a general's car to swerve into a ditch. I was summoned to the general's side and received the full force of an explosion which I shall not easily forget. I have never been so well cursed, and not being allowed to answer back, I could

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observe the progress of the paroxysm. The general settled down to a good three minutes, though it seemed much longer, and what was forced upon my startled observation was that the more he said the angrier he became. He only stopped at last because he was so angry that he literally couldn't speak.

I believe this to be typical of many people who feel free to "let off steam." At some curiously psychological moment, which they seem quite unable to distinguish, the expression of the emotion turns into a fresh stimulation of that emotion. By failing to control anger they become angrier; to indulge an emotion that does not, psychologically, require or demand indulgence is often to increase its intensity. The expression of anger is sometimes both legitimate and necessary; it may have been so, I admit, in the incident in which I figured. But it is most legitimate and most effective when it is deliberately released from control or allowed expression for a calculated object. Impulsive spontaneous anger, provoked by the sight of cruelty or some other gross exhibition of evil, is a possible exception which need not deflect us further from our main subject.

However, the allegory of the furious general has opened up two practical matters, both of them part of the same problem in conduct—the unnecessary increase of emotional energy and methods of expending that energy. Only part of what has been suggested about anger can be applied to emotions as a whole, for it is often true to say that an emotion exists in order to be expressed. In July and August of the year 1914 it was a prevalent

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notion that once the Government of a great power issued an order of mobilization, war became practically inevitable. The emotions of men and women are mobilizations of energy. They are called forth often not deliberately but inevitably, accidentally. Once they are released from their reserves they seek expression. They can often be forced back, but never quite through the same doorway through which they first came out. If they are denied expression they are suppressed "somehow or other." The retreat is not spontaneous like the advance, nor is it orderly. The energies of the emotion are dispersed rather than recaptured.

Their suppression may be but is not necessarily harmful. It is, however, nearly always painful, until a habit of self-control has been established, and it is difficult to resist the conclusion that such mobilization followed by suppression is often at least wasteful. The problem must be tackled a stage further back, so that the mobilization occurs as seldom as possible. I am, for instance, very strongly provoked to laughter in a place, or under circumstances where it is or should be impossible for me to laugh or show any outward sign of amusement. Internal spasms of laughter are apt to be painful, and can generally be achieved with success only by the heavyweight who is physically of sufficient thickness to absorb in his own body the vibrations before the latter have communicated themselves to the chair, pew or what-not upon which he is sitting. The more the victim tries to suppress the amusement the stronger does the emotion seem, and the more imperiously does it demand satisfaction. We

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have all, I imagine, our own method of dealing with such a situation; by distracting our attention, by silent internal expression (if this is not a contradiction in terms); by sheer suppression or by dispersal. Dispersal in such a case would be to think of much funnier things than the particular thing that has tickled us, or to think of something very sad; this last is a particularly risky recipe. In such a mood sad things seem sometimes so frightfully funny.

A sense of the comic is a blessed thing, and laughter in life is in itself not only harmless but necessary. Its regulation is not one of life's major problems, but it is in a trivial way typical of the larger psychological issues with which we are often faced. Illustrations both trivial and more serious are given from very different emotions because our emotional life is so complex that no one example can be safely made of general application. The attempt is being made in this chapter to indicate the kind of way in which the mind works. The reader must be left to make his own adaptations. The examples which now follow further illustrate differences in the regulation of emotion, and the difficulty and danger of attempting to find one mould or one formula for general application. Certain principles for our guidance may be emerging, perhaps nothing more.

All inherit the instinct of sex, the energy belonging to which is the creative energy for the whole of life. Made in the likeness of the Father and Creator of all, there is nothing else in which we so resemble Him as in our inherent ability to pass on

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the gift of life, and to assist in the task of creation. The sex-instinct is not our shame, as particularly to some religious people it seems to be, but it is the glory of man and woman because, like all fundamental instincts, it is divine, God-given. It is necessary for our own existence, and not only for the continuance of the race. The energy which comes from it is used by any creative artist, but not only by him. It is used in any creative or constructive hobby by the quite ordinary person; it is used by the teacher who has his heart in his work; it is used by the street-scavenger if he takes a pride in his and likes to see the fruit of his labours in a cleaner and less ugly world; it is used divinely in any childless woman's tenderness and care towards the young, the lonely or the weak.

Thus, like the instinct of self-preservation, the sex-instinct is exercised in many ways in which little or no conscious sex-emotion is experienced. It is exercised in ordinary social intercourse between the sexes, and in healthy friendship between members of the same sex, again often without the conscious realization of emotion. But for most people emotion in sex is stimulated from time to time by bodily growth and development and in the full powers of manhood and womanhood. It is not always recognized to be what it really is; it may be felt as a desire to attract attention, as a vague yearning for some satisfaction for the personality, as a craving for the beautiful.

Satisfaction can and should be found for such people without any need for them to find a label for their desire from the jargon of psychology, or

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to become sexually introspective. Their lives are lacking in the sympathy and fellowship which others might give them; they need someone to care for, someone to love; or they have insufficient means of expressing their energies creatively either in their work or in interests outside their work; or their lives are starved of beauty. Beauty through music may be instanced in particular as an emotional relief far too uncommon in the lives of many people.

But the emotion belonging to sex is often called forth and felt unmistakably for what it really is as a result of physical or mental stimulus from within a man's own being or coming from his environment; for many men and women who wish to live morally a tremendous struggle then ensues, protracted sometimes for years. It is in this matter that the theories of the new psychology have been perverted or honestly misunderstood to fit the low prevailing standard of sexual morality.

We are told, I believe quite truly, that to stifle this emotion, to condemn it, to force it back into our reserves of energy, is bad for us; that sex-repression has its tale of physical, mental, moral and spiritual disaster as has sex-indulgence. It is commonly and quite erroneously argued that here is scientific justification for the old lie—"You can't help it; it's human nature." Ten years ago the young man seeking to justify sex-irregularities would say, "After all, we're made like that; it's natural; and it's no good going against nature." To-day he says, "Repression's most awfully dangerous. Lots of people who have nervous breakdowns get them through trying to be too moral. One

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mustn't sit on the safety-valve." Darwinism, either truly repeated or misunderstood, became popular talk much more slowly than the mixture of truth and falsehood, commonly supposed to be "the new psychology" straight from the lips of Freud or Jung, has invaded the mind of the man in the street. Its influence extends far beyond those who have ever read about it in magazine articles or who know how to spell psychology.

There are just a few things which can be usefully urged in face of this new popular gospel of self-expression. The first and perhaps most important is that there is so much truth in what is being said that a reform in the Church's method of teaching moral conduct, not only in sex but in the whole sphere of character, is long overdue. Mere stifling of impulse never was a cardinal point in the teaching of Jesus Christ. If His life and example have not taught us to insist upon a positive rather than a negative attitude to life we had better have the humility to learn it from psychology rather than from nowhere at all.

When the Church as a whole becomes more sympathetic with the difficulties of the individual and shows that it can and will help people with something more satisfying than negative commands, then people will be readier to attend to the answers that can be given in the name of Christian morality to some of the plausible arguments advanced against it. And on the particular matter now under consideration there are at least two answers.

We have seen how people emotionally affected from sex-energy without realizing it can within

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limits satisfy that craving in other ways. The same avenues of expression and means of satisfaction are available for those who are aware that they are faced with a moral struggle. Religion itself, all that is meant by loving God; the call to help mankind in however humble a way, a call that is instinctive in us really because we are members of a group or herd; expression through music and the other arts; the pursuit of adventure; friendship and worship—these will absorb some of the emotion which may not be spent in physical indulgence of sex.

Such dispersal or diversion of energy, regarded not only as happy and useful forms of self-expression, but of God-expression in the life of men, will not solve the difficulty for some. There will still remain for some a surplus of emotional energy which, apparently, must be controlled rather than expressed. Provided that mere repressive control has not been the policy adopted towards the sex-instinct as a whole, no harmful results need be feared as a consequence of the control of what remains, and there can be few psychologists of repute who would say otherwise. Nor is the struggle that remains impossibly hard, nor need it result in defeat. The method of applying prayer and faith and discipline to this and similar situations in the development of moral character and spiritual power has already been discussed in previous chapters of this book.

The plea that not only through sex, but through the acquisitive and other instincts "human nature" proves too strong to control must be met in yet

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another way. As has been shown in the illustration, from fear an emotion may be increased in force through a man's own careless or wilful treatment of it. We say that "fear captures the imagination," but the imagination also exaggerates fear and increases the tenacity of its grip. In the same way it often happens that a person stimulates the emotion of sexual desire quite unnecessarily. He encourages himself to dwell upon vivid mental pictures of a sexual character, pictures which he can call to mind at all only because of past conversations in which he need not have taken part, of lurid books which he need not have read, of public entertainments flanked by a saloon-bar and stage-managed with a view to gratifying or arousing sexual passion for commercial profits. The exploitation of human emotion is a very paying concern, and alcohol plays no small part in it.

Many men handicap themselves in this way without realizing the result, others more deliberately. It is absurdly untrue to say of the emotion so stimulated and intensified, "It's natural; I can't help it." It is in its own way as artificial as the new appetite created during the banquet by the emetic in ancient Rome. Small wonder that people who know or care so little what their minds and mouths have been doing find themselves suddenly in the grip of a lust which seems overwhelming. What was fine, noble, sacramental has been perverted and degraded. Their sin is the misuse of that which in itself is perfectly right.

The harm resulting from the stimulation of the emotion of sex is obvious. The stimulation of any

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emotion for which there is not a suitable vent may be harmful too, though the harm is not always so apparent. It seems sometimes as if an emotion unnaturally intensified and seeking an outlet, at first in vain, changes its character and bursts out in unexpected forms and along almost uncharted channels.¹ Without attempting to reduce them to any one formula or principle we may notice instances of this diversity.

Music, so valuable as an expression of emotional energy, may in the performer or listener, who is much moved by it and is off his guard, stir the emotions so keenly that they will find expression or react in some excess unless they are used as driving energy for some definite purpose. This is one of the difficulties of what is known as the artistic temperament. A fictitious tragedy in poem, novel or play is valuable in purging the emotions, particularly of those who are brooding on their own real or imagined troubles; a fit of depression has before now been cured by "The Only Way"; yet for some people to be deeply stirred in this way is as dangerous sometimes as to be so stirred by music.

It is silly if not worse after the experience of any emotion, especially if it is deliberately stimulated, to do nothing with it but to leave it like so much effervescence in an insecurely fastened bottle. To be moved to pity and to do nothing about it is wrong. Whether the emotion has been stirred by fiction in book or play, or by a reality such as

¹ It must be also remembered that life has a law of rhythm and that strong feelings tend to be succeeded by periods of reaction.

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a street-beggar or a procession of ex-service unemployed, it must be used. Even in the latter instance it cannot often be most suitably employed by putting sixpence or even a ten-shilling note into the hand or cap of the beggar or collector. One is uncomfortable (as with amusement) until the emotion is satisfied, and to take this course is simply to purchase a certain internal relief for oneself—self-satisfaction. It is nice to know we were not hard-hearted.

To investigate the situation and to procure for the sufferer, if genuine, more permanent assistance is better use of pity. If this cannot be done, or if he turn out a hardened impostor, it is not wise to leave the emotion undischarged, nor to let it turn into vexation and discharge itself in abuse. It is no bad plan to have an account-book and make a cash entry which adequately represents the pity felt, and then from time to time to add up the sums and send the total to a hospital fund or some other reputable agency for the relief of genuine distress.

The man who feels pity often and does not discharge its obligations may one day become pity-hardened. The emotion so constantly evoked to no end will come less easily as time goes on. He will see and hear pathetic things and cease to care; for Pity has passed him by. Or he will go to the other extreme and more constantly indulge his sense of the pathetic, wallowing in orgies of pity—a heaving mass of sloppy sentimentality.

All this is waste or worse, if there be anything

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worse than waste. Emotion of any kind, spontaneously evoked, is God's spiritual energy to be harnessed to the chariot of life. In all such emotion, whether we call it religious or not, we have an experience of God Himself, and Jesus of Nazareth will pass us by unless we call to Him or respond to His call of us. Above all is this true of experience that is more obviously and directly religious. Notorious are the moral dangers of religious services or missions making an emotional appeal, when there is no adequate assurance that those who are moved by it will translate their feelings into terms of practical life. Many of us, good tempered at other times, have fallen a victim to impatience or ill-temper within an hour of returning from the Lord's Table. The cause of this is not physical alone.

Religious emotion is evoked in a variety of ways—alone with the glories of nature out of doors, or together with friends planning social reform and waxing enthusiastic about Christian crusades. However and whenever men and women are moved in their hearts towards the Master of their discipleship they must consider how best to interpret that experience in terms of a fresh resolution for daily life, another step in spiritual progress. It is their pool of Bethesda; the angel will not wait.

The reply of Christianity to claims for self-expression is anything but a sheer negation; it could not be that if Christians believe that to express oneself at one's highest and best is to show forth God in the life of the world. But it is no use pretending that the Gospel of Jesus can be so

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easily accommodated to what is really the claim, advanced by many, that they are free to do exactly what they like. There is all the difference between unco-ordinated and irresponsible satisfaction of primitive impulse and the expression of natural powers trained and disciplined towards the noblest ends. But there is a still sharper contradiction between the two principles of life.

The heart and centre of Christianity, as we are accustomed to think of it, is not self-expression at all but self-sacrifice. These two seem to be exact opposites. I believe it to be no matter of misplaced ingenuity to show that there is no irreconcilable contradiction between the Christian call to self-denial and the Christian belief that Jesus came into the world in order that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

Yet much can be made of this apparent contradiction by the self-expressionists. Christianity, they say, is concerned chiefly with the Cross. The Cross is a denial of life and a denial of self. As the Cross was physical mutilation, so is self-denial and self-sacrifice a mutilation of personality. It is inartistic, they say; it is ugliness and starvation. This line is urged, not only by the avowed hedonist, but by many who are quite sincere in believing that if God there be He must needs be Beauty, as well as Truth and Goodness.

It is unlikely that those who advance this theory will be persuaded by argument, but we cannot leave it unanswered for ourselves. It has already been partly met in what has been said, but the answer

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must be further developed. The Christian should be the first to agree that beauty is an essential part of his religion, and that he thinks of God in terms not only of Truth and Goodness but of Beauty no less. There can be nothing unlovely in God's Nature nor in His Will for man. But there is such a thing as beauty of character. This is no misuse of words; beauty in this matter is not a colourless quality that is interchangeable with nobility or any other attribute of moral character. The same is true in works of art and in the glories of nature; we speak of some of them as noble, fine, or striking, when we do not feel that they can be quite classified as "beautiful."

We shall differ no doubt in our judgment of what is beautiful in character as in art, according to our standards or our powers of perception. One would instance St. Francis, another Abraham Lincoln, another some private soldier whose body lies in Flanders fields; another would instance a school-teacher or a Lancashire mill-girl who will never be canonized, nor her name known. But no matter whom we select it will never be one who has lived life on the principle of giving rein to primitive impulse. It will be always someone who has trained and disciplined or used natural impulse to what he conceived to be the best.

Christians are by no means alone in claiming for beauty of character an equal value with beauty in other departments of life. Only those whose system of values takes no account of beauty in character can deride Christian self-denial as in-

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artistic. Yet there is an extremity of self-sacrifice, as we see it in the Cross, which does seem to some the utter negation of life, and the question is asked: "What else is this than starvation of life. In what is it creative?" Awkward as the question seems at first, it is amazing that it can be asked at all, for sacrifice is as creative as the act of the mother who gives her life for her child.

Through the Resurrection Christians believe that the Cross is the Gateway of Life. But even those who as dogmatically assert that Calvary was the end of Jesus Christ cannot deny entirely the creative value of Good Friday. Christians cannot and will not separate it in its meaning and value from Easter, but many would urge that even standing alone the Cross of Jesus Christ, the symbol of utter and complete self-surrender, has proved the most truly positive and creative symbol in the history of the world. It is no less creative because it claims a discipleship that shall be rigorously self-disciplined.¹

Our own experience of life to-day witnesses the same. It is blasphemy against both living and dead to say that those who have dedicated themselves at the risk of life itself to a cause or person other than their own are, or were, starved and mutilated personalities as a result of their gift. The compelling force that issues from many a man and woman is engendered by self-sacrifice alone. Yet here again those whose system of values is narrowly material, who deny the reality or the use of the spiritual, take no account of the most important element in

¹ On asceticism, see "After the War," Bishop of Southwark, p. 43.

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personality. They do not see how true it is that those who are prepared to lose life, find it, and that self-sacrifice is the climax of self-expression because it is the highest expression of Jesus Christ who is God.

CHAPTER VII
PSYCHOLOGY IN THE BIBLE

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PSYCHOLOGY IN THE BIBLE

MOST of us nowadays do not look to Genesis or any part of the Bible to instruct us in physical science. Our belief in the Bible as the inspired word of God is not upset if it appears that one writer or another seems to have been ignorant or even mistaken in matters on which modern scientific discovery claims to give us correct information.

The Bible describes to us the evolution of man's conceptions about his relationship to God; or, to put it the other way round, the Bible describes God's gradual revelation of Himself to man. The description reaches its climax in the Gospel of Christ. So it is that the Bible is not only a revelation of God, but a mine of information about human nature. On man's side his relationship to God is a matter not only of his $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ or soul, but of his mind, emotions and character. We cannot study a description of the relationship between God and man without learning as much about man as we do about God.

We should therefore expect the Bible to conform more closely to truth in psychology than to truth in chemistry or physics. Men, for whom we claim the inspiration of God, need not, in the opinion of many of us, have known or guessed much, if

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anything, about the atomic theory ; but just because they were describing the impact of God's revelation on the mind and character they must have known or divined the truth about human personality. It is not necessary that they should have held theories about complexes or subconscious minds. It was true of them as of many to-day who live near to God that they had an inspired common-sense which led them into the heart of psychological truth without any knowledge of psychology.

The same inspired sense is to be found throughout the centuries in the Church's teaching though not always in all of it. The attempt to commend Christian faith and practice through psychology might not be really necessary if we could be, without it, sufficiently interested in the Bible to study it with intelligence and apply its lessons faithfully. Those, however, who believe that psychological knowledge, when true, comes from God may be eager to learn from it and to test its truth by reference to the Word of God.

This does not mean that we need set about an analytical study of biblical characters ; this can be profitably done with them as with those of Shakespeare or of any book whose characters are true to life. It can be done even more profitably with the Bible than with Shakespeare, because the background of the former is the fundamental question of the relationship between God and man. But it is not chiefly this study of the Bible that is now recommended. Still less is a study recommended of what is macabre in the pages of Scripture. We are already sufficiently deluged, in books and talk,

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with the psychology of the morbid and the abnormal. Nor is it proposed that we should apply amateur psycho-analysis to Joseph's dreams, to Peter's, nor even to the vision of Isaiah. They may be of interest to the psychologist or the philosopher, but for practical purposes for the wayfaring Christian such an analysis would be a misuse of time and God's Word alike.

There remains a vast field, practically unexplored, in the spiritual and moral teaching and example of prophet, poet and apostle alike. When the experts write books attempting to cover this ground much will be left on which the individual Christian, with but little knowledge of psychology, can still throw light. Only through the infinite variety of individual experience can the Word of God be fully appreciated. As things are now with so little written that is accessible on this subject, much of value to himself can be discovered by anyone studying the Bible with a sane and reverent psychological interest in what it has to reveal. This chapter will do no more than illustrate this contention, in order to encourage others to return to the Bible with renewed interest and make fresh discoveries of value to themselves.

The mind, meaning apparently the conscious power of reasoning or reflective intelligence, is a word much more commonly used in the Bible than many suppose. Combine with it the use of such words as think, imagine, thought, imagination, and you have a group which appear as commonly as any other group or idea at all. For the religion of the Bible, particularly of the New Testament,

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is an appeal not only to man's conscience and emotions, but also to his mind and intelligence. Sin is ascribed not only to hardened conscience or weakness of will but also to imperfect understanding, to wrong thinking. In Genesis God is described as explaining man's wickedness by the declaration that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is evil.¹ If we jump from Genesis to Ephesians we find in the fourth chapter, as in very many other places, the Christian teacher defining sin in the same way. He refers to those who "walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened"; he mentions their ignorance and the "blindness of their heart"; he exhorts his hearers to be renewed in the spirit of their mind.

Psychology has extended the content of the word mind to include not only conscious reflection, but the whole area of mental processes, those in the subconscious just out of reach of conscious command and those hidden deep down in the unconscious. The scriptural use of the word is much more limited, but writers of our Scriptures were aware of some more fundamental organ of the personality than the conscious mind, and for this organ they used the word "heart." This word is not to be confused, nor was it confused by them, with the soul of man, nor yet again with man's spirit. Men are spoken of as souls and as spirits, but never as hearts. Heart is not the person but the organ through which the person functions. As the physical heart was to them the

¹ Gen. vi. 5.

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centre and shrine of physical life, so the word came to signify "the seat of man's collective energies," the focus of the personal life.¹

This second meaning and use of the word does not change in the passage from Old Testament to New, except perhaps that in the Old it has more often an emotional significance; it is used to denote all inner human movements, and it derives this secondary or psychical meaning from the intermediate use of heart not only as the hidden centre of the body but as the hidden centre of any material thing. "The depths were congealed in the heart of the sea."² "In the heart of the earth."³ On close examination it would not be found that the use of heart in the Bible exactly corresponds to the meaning attached by psychologists to "the whole mind," but it is not far from it.

The scriptural use of heart as the hidden organ of man's personality is so frequent that quotations here are unnecessary. Those who are interested may follow up the idea in the pages of the Bible itself. This reiteration of mind, thought, imagination, heart in the Bible need not surprise us. It is not, in the sphere of conduct, disproportionate. Practically all human conduct can be defined or described in terms of mind, even seemingly automatic actions. The mental effort demanded of a child putting on his hat for the first time himself is obvious to anyone who has observed the process. Through constant repetition mind dictates a habit on the subject so that in later years the action

¹ See Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible," Vol. II.

² Exod. xv. 8.

³ Matt. xii. 40.

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almost ceases to be consciously determined. Yet a glimpse of the mind's part even in habitual or instantaneous action could be caught by anyone seeing the slowed-down film of Mlle. Lenglen hitting a tennis ball. If this theory of the part played by mind in conduct is agreed, then the mind, in the largest sense, is of paramount importance. Therefore to apply psychology, the study of the mind, to religion is not to exaggerate but to reveal afresh what is already in religion, as reference to the Bible will show.

Constantly in the preceding chapters of this book, as in a previous book, scriptural affirmation of psychological theories has been illustrated.¹ A few further and typical examples will now be given. Apart from the Gospel record of our Lord's teaching there is probably no book so full of psychology, or of inspired understanding of human nature as the book of Psalms. This I know from personal experience, but the Psalms lie beside me now and I open the book at random and find myself looking at the 36th Psalm. It is a psalm in part about the wickedness of the ungodly.

"There is no fear of God before his eyes."
"He flattereth himself in his own sight." These are the opening accusations, and they both of them imply the importance of the imagination which we have considered so much. "Eyes" and "sight"—the psalmist speaks of man as thinking in pictures, and we have already noted how strong is the influence of such thought upon us for good or ill. In verse 4—"He imagineth mischief upon his bed"—a

¹ See also "St. Paul and Social Psychology," Barry.

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common misuse of auto-suggestion, with the inevitable result, "and hath set himself in no good way."

Chosen in less haphazard way, many a psalm, like the 111th, in spite of its old-fashioned language, is a magnificent illustration of a man putting before his mind the right ideas in order that they may impregnate it and dominate his life. Often this is done deliberately; it is clear in some psalms that the writer is depressed by the injustice and the wickedness of the world and deliberately replaces the picture of that with the picture of God's goodness and beauty and power. In the 115th Psalm a description is given of idols, man's mistaken pictures of God. The psalmist graphically details their impotence, and then makes what may be called an inspired guess at the psychological truth, as we have seen it, that we grow like the thing we are constantly imagining—"They that make them are like unto them: and so are all such as put their trust in them."

Let us turn from the wonders of the Psalms as a whole to one particular instance, the clue to which was given me in the private devotions of Bishop Lancelot Andrewes,¹ who in a prayer extracted from the 17th, 20th and 133rd verses sums up the essential teaching of the 119th Psalm. At first sight this psalm seems less interesting and varied and by reason of its excessive length and repetition, more monotonous than most psalms. Statutes, laws, judgments, commandments and testimonies abound with an almost wearisome profusion. But there are three main threads, one or

¹ S.P.C.K.

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more of which will be found in each section of the psalm, and Andrewes summed them up in the three texts already referred to—"Open Thou mine eyes" (and I shall see and consider); "Incline mine heart" (and I shall break out with fervent desire); "Order my steps" (and I shall walk in the way of Thy commandments).

These three ideas dominate the psalm. The first is expressed in many other ways: "Grant me *understanding*," "Teach me Thy statutes," "Learn me true *understanding* and *knowledge*." The second also: "My *delight* is in Thy commandments," "I *love* Thy commandments," "Thy law do I *love*," "In Thy law is my *delight*." And so the third: "Make me to *go* in the path of Thy commandments (for therein is my desire)," "Hold Thou me up," "Let Thine hand *help* me," "I have *kept* Thy testimonies."

These three ideas in the psalmist's religious life correspond closely to the three stages in human action. First perception: my attention is drawn to something, and if it is not immediately plain I seek to understand it. Secondly, inclination or choice: having noticed something, I experience a certain reaction in regard to it: I like or dislike it; I want it or don't want it; I have a sense of obligation about it, or I quell that sense of obligation, I make an act of choice. Thirdly, executive action: I carry out my decision or attempt to do so.

¹ " 'Pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been?'
'I've been up to London to see the Queen.'"

¹ This text is borrowed, but I do not know to what source I owe it.

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So far, so good. But the underlying interest of her life was not queens, but mice, and it was for a mouse and not for any queen that she had eyes and paws when she reached London. Along the same three miles of country-road different men will notice different things according to their varying interests. The soldier will note where he would cast a trench or post machine-guns. Another will look on the landscape in terms of a nine-hole golf-course or a run with hounds. Another at the end of the walk will know only that the country was well-timbered or that there were few wild flowers, or only three public-houses, one per mile.

This is true to life as a whole. We tend to make certain pictures about life, and to be blind to other pictures. We form certain anticipations about other people, or, soon after we have met them, develop certain prejudices about them, and expect to see in them afterwards nothing but a reproduction of our own false or partial pictures of them. Besides this, people tend to be in their dealings with us what we expect them to be, for good or evil. The psychological effect of our anticipation upon ourselves and others is nothing short of portentous.¹ Already in this book much has been

¹ Myself I do not doubt the effect of one's thoughts in general on other people, an effect not necessarily limited by conditions of space or even of time. As I have heard the Bishop of St. Albans say recently, we are continually broadcasting good or bad thoughts, picked up by and influencing those whose minds are in tune with them. I believe that one day this theory may be scientifically demonstrated. If so, we shall have an explanation, but only in part, of what Christians mean when they speak of "spiritual" forces for good and evil in or behind the material.

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said about the necessity of holding, both of God and ourselves, pictures that correspond to some reality. The need to form and hold true pictures of other people is scarcely less important.

Thus the psalmist is right, psychologically, in laying emphasis on clear perception, intelligent understanding. To see life from God's point of view and see it whole, to have a true imagination and to use it to discover God's purposes, is the first requisite. The second is to react aright to what we already see and apprehend. A woman's attention is drawn to a shop-window she is passing; she stops to study the fashion and the price of hats. She becomes inclined or disinclined to enter the shop; her final decision is, whether she knows it or not, the result of a combination of three factors, or it is due to the victory of one or of two of three factors over the remainder. These three factors are her reason or power of judgment, her desires, and her conscience. Any one of these may be entirely quiescent; for instance she may be so extravagant, that the question as to whether there is any sense in buying another hat, whether or not she really needs it, may never arise. Or conscience may be atrophied on the subject; it never occurs to her that there is any question of ought or ought not in the matter. Or she may have no very strong desire in the matter; she has just got to buy a new hat (reason), and, having no taste or inclinations in hats, it is simply a question of buying *a* hat. (An improbable woman, but not unknown.)

For many people in life's choices, particularly in the more important decisions, all three elements

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enter in : " I want to, and it's reasonable enough, but I'm not sure that I ought." " It's utter folly, and I shall loathe it, but I feel I must." " I ought to, but it seems silly, and so I won't." Often the outcome of the agreement or disagreement of desire, reason and conscience is instantaneous or nearly so. The decision of to-day is the foregone conclusion that results from various decisions in lesser matters which have gone before, in which the habit has been formed of allowing one of the three factors to dominate decisive choice at the expense of one or both of the others. The decision arises from the unconscious, unrecognized for what it really is. To deal with this difficulty aright we need the two first principles upon which the writer of the 119th Psalm insisted ; a clear vision of our own motives, self-knowledge, together with a clear recognition of God's Will, resulting from this self-knowledge ; then a desire, a stirring of the emotions, an urge of the whole personality towards the Will of God.

But the action is still incomplete ; the woman is still in front of the window, and we can't leave her there. The man of business has grasped the situation laid before him and has then made his choice. It remains to put that decision into action and to see it through to the end. The action when complete is the irrevocable expression, in human activity, of the sum total and combination of the man's faculties ; his perception and intelligence, his imagination and foresight, his desires, his reason, his conscience. These or the lack of them, their balance and proportion in him, make the man, and

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the action that results is "characteristic" of him; it expresses his will, that is himself.

It might be supposed that for the Christian the third of these stages was the simplest, but, as we have already seen, it is not, and we have already tried to consider the effective application of Faith to the situation in which a man has understood God's will and decided to obey it, is indeed desperately anxious to do so, but doubts his ability to carry out his intention, hesitates at the beginning, doubts in the middle or gives up hope at the end. It is much to see clearly and to decide right, but it is quite another matter to carry the decision through; it is one thing to decide to live and work on the right lines, another to produce the executive ability needed for efficient action.

"Open Thou mine eyes," "Incline mine heart," "Order my steps." Knowledge, choice, power. Help me to know God's will, to love it, to do it. In these for the Christian lies the whole of conduct, and it is unnecessary to attempt to distinguish the three stages in importance. They are all vital. They are too the critical stages of human action, regarded psychologically and quite apart from religion. The psalmist's reiteration of them is a fair and adequate example of the intuitive sense of psychology belonging to those who living close to God derived from Him their inspiration.

The New Testament need not yield first place to the Psalms.¹ We are often so busy with ethics

¹ So many references to it are made in other chapters that only a few further illustrations are collected here. See also "Psychology and the Christian Life."

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and moral exhortations that we fail to notice the appeal made implicitly by our Lord so often to the mind, to the appreciation of the inspired common sense which He taught. To try and interpret all His teaching in terms of common-sense alone would be an outrage and an exaggeration. But anyone who from time to time turns to one of the Gospels and examines Christ's teaching with this idea in mind is likely to profit by so doing.

He will find that in many places in which he has always supposed Jesus to be illustrating wickedness or lack of faith, Jesus is also illustrating sheer stupidity, lack of thought or sense. In this connection it is easy at once to recall the virgins, five of whom showed common-sense and five of whom were just stupid. His terrifying picture of the two men who built their houses, one on rock, the other on sand, is an appeal to the intelligence as much as to anything else. "Everyone that heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them not"—"Don't you see," He seems to be saying, "how very foolish it would be not to do as I say? You can't do anything in life except on the right foundation. Why go and choose the wrong? It's so foolish to build on sand."

How very stupid again for blind men to offer themselves as guides to other blind men, and for the latter to accept such guides! The moat and the beam have already been mentioned; surely our Lord is not only teaching the lesson that those who live in moral glass-houses must not throw stones, that a man must put his own house in order before he presumes to correct others. There is

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more in it than that. He was insisting that defects of character, weaknesses, sins, often render a man *incapable* of helping other people; his own judgment of life and its true values is obscured. Without any undue subtlety that parable may be claimed in support of the theory, advanced in this book, of the common, though not universal connection between religion and efficiency.

There is much else in our Lord's teaching on faith and conduct which we are willing to accept from Him whether or not we have thought out the wisdom of it. Some do not need to try and think it out, at any rate for their own sakes. To many the wisdom of it becomes proved through personal experience of human nature in themselves and others. Some who lack this experience may be glad to use psychological theories in order to understand His wisdom, and to test truth in psychology by reference to His teaching and example.

Jesus said, for instance, that to look on a woman lustfully was to commit adultery with her in the heart. With the moral justice of this many would agree; many a man who has often wanted to sin in sexual indulgence has been prevented simply by timidity, by inexperience or lack of opportunity. The lust which he has encouraged, the attempt which he has made, have lacked satisfaction or completion through no merit of his own, as he would often admit. He has sinned in his heart, and it is no use deceiving himself about it. That seems to be the ethical point involved. But psychologically the teaching is equally exact. The lust is no mere spontaneous inclination, to experi-

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ence which would be in itself no sin. But the inclination, which cannot be rightly satisfied in physical intercourse, is nevertheless encouraged and the man intensifies its emotional force by a misuse of the imagination. He holds a picture in his mind, looking on a woman lustfully. And he allows that picture to sink through his consciousness and become an uncensored part of his subconscious mental life—his heart. It becomes a “suggestion”; one day it may translate itself into action. It is certain to return to him at some moment when he least desires it, no longer a God-given natural impulse, but a sin from the heart, the organ of his personality.

The hypocrite condemned for trumpeting his almsgiving in the street¹ was not blamed because he was making a pretence of giving alms. The gift itself was perfectly genuine. But the motive was less the service of God than that he might have the praise of men. Hence the trumpet. That may or may not have succeeded in deceiving men, but the trouble with the hypocrite was that he was deceiving himself.

In the same chapter St. Matthew records our Lord's vivid condemnation of worry and anxiety. For the Christian constant worry is unfaithful; psychologically it is nearly the most wasteful and disintegrating element in the mind, and, when successfully repressed from consciousness, it is productive of all manner of suffering and inefficiency. In the next chapter Jesus is quoted as rebuking the emotionalism of those who cry “Lord! Lord!”

¹ St. Matt. vi.

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and then fail to apply their feelings about Him to any practical attempt to carry out His Heavenly Father's will. Spiritual energy has been frittered away, and some work left undone for which that energy was supplied. On another occasion he instantly turned an emotional outburst into a practical channel. "Blessed is the womb that bare thee," a woman cried, and drew His quick retort, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it." ¹

At the end of the sixth chapter of this book self-sacrifice was considered as the means to the highest form of self-expression rather than as any contradiction of it. If this is a law of our soul's being, then it must be good psychology. Nowhere else in the Bible is this great principle of life so well described as in the twelfth chapter of St. John's Gospel: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." ² Dr. Westcott, in his commentary, pointed out that the corn is the element which has in it the principle of new growth; in falling to the ground it is separated from all in which it had lived before. But this is the only alternative to "abiding alone," when the grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away.

To abide alone is isolation, death. From the standpoint of psychology, morality and religion alike it is true to say that "Fellowship is life; lack of fellowship is death." True self-sacrifice, the seeming death, is the great contribution of the individual to society and to fellowship: "If it

¹ St. Luke xi.

² Verse 24.

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die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Again, from the standpoint of psychology, morality and religion alike, it is what we call "selfishness" alone that is the destruction or negation of life. And what we commonly call "death" in sacrifice or self-surrender is the condition of the highest life. Dr. Westcott says, "Every nobler form of being presupposes the loss of that which precedes."¹

But the Gospel abounds in psychological teaching. The mind in its largest sense, called, as I believe, in the New Testament the heart, is the organ through which we act. The mind—its education and development, its control must be of first importance in the religious life. If this is so then the study of psychology on its practical side, and the place of the mind in daily life, need to receive much more serious attention than the Church is yet giving them. Before accepting this one would expect to find the mind, its education, development and control bulking large in the inspired Word of God. If psychology is the science of human nature, and religion is the science of nature, human and divine, then one would expect to find any amount of true psychology in true religion. It is likely that both these expectations can be realized through a fresh study of the inexhaustible riches of the Bible. This chapter is no more than the faintest indication of old lessons that so might be relearned.

I believe it would be found that the Bible may contain mistaken psychological guesses, as many of

¹ The implications of this idea are to be found in "St. Paul and Social Psychology."

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us are not over-disturbed to think that it contains mistaken guesses in other branches of science. But psychology is an art as much as it is a science, and in the art of living the authors of the Bible, rightly interpreted, even those whose claim to full inspiration we may qualify, made but few mistakes; and even from such mistakes there is much that we can learn. After such an admission it is perhaps permissible to add that the truth in Christ, as revealed in the New Testament, has a part to play in checking certain extravagances and correcting certain errors that appear and no doubt will continue to appear in the theories and dogmas of those who see the world through spectacles of modern psychology alone.

CHAPTER VIII
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

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It may be worth while applying some of the ideas with which we have been occupied to the life of the group or the herd, whether it is that of our own country, the world as a whole or the Church of Christ. And first let us consider the use or abuse of collective emotion. Of this war affords one of the more obvious examples.

War wastes much, in life and wealth and happiness, but it is above all perhaps a waste of spiritual energy. Hate is manufactured artificially on all sides; that is to say, energy is spent in the exercise of a bad emotion, deliberately stimulated, which might have been expressed as a good emotion in other ways. But that is not all. What unless we take care will go down to history not as the Great War, but as "one of the great wars" or as "the last great war but one," seems to some of us who can remember it a wanton riot and waste of emotions, and not of hate alone. For over four years the warring nations lived in a welter alternately of sloppy sentiment, of strangled pity,¹ of hope disillusioned, of hysterical excitement, of fear, panic and revenge. In all countries the large majority

¹ The war has left many people "pity-hardened." The thought of mere unemployment or disease can scarcely move them.

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of men and women through whom spiritual energy was emotionally wasted during those awful years did not want war and were not responsible for it, except in so far as war truly is the culmination of individual selfishness heaped high.

Not only in war is energy wasted that might go to make a Kingdom of God on earth. In general elections such as we have known the last few years emotion is not merely wasted but recklessly stimulated and shamelessly exploited by all parties. As long as the provision of public amusements is in the main on a basis of financial profit rather than of public service, many will be found in the profession catering for bad forms of emotion and exploiting them for commercial gain. One may be permitted to wonder when, if ever, the general public will turn in resentment against this form of exploitation. There is the author who uses our natural interest in the problems of sex and provides an outlet for it in his novels or other writings, thus making a perfectly legitimate living by meeting a legitimate demand. There is the other who trades upon our sex-instinct by writing books in order to inflame it and thus creates a morbid and unnatural demand for the goods which he is only too ready to supply. This is exploitation.

He is assisted by the newspaper proprietor who headlines any really degrading case from the law-courts, and makes it appear the chief news of the hour. All honour to those in control of newspapers who refuse to increase their sales by this kind of appeal. Again, many a bookmaker is an honest and hard-working man, but the collection

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of bookies and their touts and a section of the Press behind horse-racing and football represent a combine in exploitation which is gigantic in its extent and ramifications.¹ Some newspapers and many bookies thrive and flourish on the artificial stimulation of the British sporting instinct, and of the human love of a risk, both in themselves noble qualities. Thus is the good in human nature perverted and exploited.

A remedy for the misuse of collective emotional impulse might be expected from organized religion, and Christianity is certainly a check on it. But we do not always set a good example. We introduce sometimes into our religious differences and ecclesiastical controversies an emotional tone that should have no place there. Church-people of various persuasions are sometimes stimulated into a rivalry with or hostility towards each other which is utterly wasteful. We often stimulate and concentrate emotional energy on things of completely second- or third-rate importance. Nor is the unrevised Book of Common Prayer in the Church of England an adequate pattern of how best in this century to stimulate and give expression to religious emotion.

There are also some mistakes into which groups of Christians or religious organizations may fall as easily as may the individual; even when we do not actually commit the mistake we may give the appearance of doing so or influence other people to make it. For to many people we appear to stand for a religion that is dope; a religion that

¹ See "Betting and Gambling," Canon Peter Green, S.C.M.

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seems too exclusively concerned with personal consolation and individual salvation. It is true, of course, that Christianity preaches first and foremost a personal relationship between each individual soul and his God, and that in the last event we each of us stand alone with Him. First and last it is that individual relationship which matters most.

Within this central truth of our religion there is also, as so often, an apparent and great contradiction. The contradiction is perhaps more than merely apparent, and we must remain perplexed by it until the day when, because we see face to face, truth will cease to be a matter of relativity. The contradiction is that salvation is not only an individual question, but is inextricably involved in the salvation of society. Jesus Christ Himself had no use for the person whose chief interest lay in himself. Around His own Cross is weaved the epitaph: "He saved others; Himself He cannot save."

The contradiction can scarcely be evaded with honesty. He Himself spoke as if a man's soul or life must be more precious to the man himself than all else in the world, and yet again as if any exclusive interest in that possession would be the surest method of destroying it. The interrelation of man to man in the purposes of God taught throughout the New Testament is well summed up in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (chapter 12). This chapter is the preface to that in which St. Paul gives the famous description of Christian love, without which all else we may do is worth nothing. He says, "Whether one member suffer, all the

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members suffer with it ; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

We cannot afford to disregard either side of the truth. Different forms of such disregard may be mentioned, and not many of us can claim to be entirely guiltless. It would not be impossible, for instance, to find more than one group of business men or doctors or lawyers or students meeting regularly or from time to time to study the Bible and join together in prayer, united by the two strands, one of their common profession or work in life, the other of their devotion to our Lord.

If you were to ask a member of a group of this particular character what light their studies and devotions threw upon the problems of their professional life, he would probably show surprise at the question and produce no adequate answer. The question, for instance, might take the form "All you men are bankers (or on the Stock Exchange or at the Bar); how do you agree to apply Christian principles to banking, to problems of commercial morality?" And the answer—"Oh, but we don't meet to discuss things like that. We try and get away from the world altogether. We meet for Christian Fellowship and to study God's Word." A similar occupation is the kind of "Sacramentarianism that doesn't make a man any better."

In such a group faith is not merely static; it is deliberately fired into emotional zeal by use of the imagination in order that it may be applied to practical advantage in life. But the personal holiness, the companionship of Jesus, so cultivated, is

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of limited application. Religion as a personal matter may thus become dissociated from the life of society as a whole, and each man may live two lives which are in his mind completely unrelated. He is a Christian and he wants all others to be, and talks to some of them about it. He is also a merchant or a stockbroker. That is a separate life. I am not implying that he is or can be at one and the same time a sincere Christian and a fraudulent man of business. But whereas he is enthusiastic as a Christian, he is purely conventional as a man of business. The two sides of his life are dealt with in water-tight compartments of his mind. The emotion of his religious experience finds no play onto the problems of the society of which he is a member. It has never occurred to him that Christianity has anything to say about the part his worldly profession does or might play in a state of society which is as yet far from being Christian.

The dissociated or unrelated mind is psychologically undesirable. It is even more to be regretted when it is religion that is locked up in a compartment of its own. If anyone who is in this condition (or any form of it) is really pressed hard on the matter his answer is something like this: "All these problems you talk about would disappear if the world were converted." Unfortunately this often really means "if the world were converted exactly as I was," or "if the world accepted the true faith"; this again may mean the Church of Rome, or Anglo-Catholicism, or sometimes just the particular brand of Christianity in all its meticulous details as purveyed at the church round the

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corner by Father So-and-So or Comrade Somebody Else.¹

On the other hand, there are many Christians who feel that these rival claims to a final and exclusive deposit of Christian truth cancel each other, and that extreme partizan interest in any one of them may prove a dangerous narcotic to any sufficient sensitiveness about the world's need. They believe too that a method, comparatively untried, of converting many to Christ is by an appeal to the Christ-like that is in all men, through stimulating their emotions about the welfare of their neighbour, and harnessing that emotion to some practical self-denial for their neighbour's sake.

Those who work towards this end stand for "The Kingdom of God in this world," and are often fine examples of dynamic faith. They have, however, their own particular temptations. Their eyes have been opened, and their hearts inclined, but they often rely too much on themselves to order their own steps. In a reaction from a form of religion which seems to them self-centred and unrelated to the world's need, they lay insufficient store by that communion with God of which they might learn more from those others. They are tempted to stress the importance of the material at the expense of the spiritual.

We may be thankful to think that there are many who, to judge by their work and influence, have for themselves harmonized the great contradiction and brought both Christian duties into something near the stature of the fulness of Christ. And most

¹ See Miller, *ibid.*, p. 185, and the man quoted on p. 153.

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sincere Christians will probably agree in deploring a more superficial type of person for whom sheer ignorance may sometimes but by no means always be advanced as an excuse. For there is a type of professing Christian who ought to have died out but still exists in too great numbers, the person, I mean, who regards Christianity as a desirable narcotic for other people. The dope is sometimes administered in the form of "The Church (or the Bible) says that this or that is wrong, so you mustn't do it." In this direct form the attempt to chloroform the mind of the rising generation becomes each year less successful. There are, however, more indirect ways of achieving the same object which are sometimes successful in passing on the poison. Authority is a necessary factor in life; but herd-suggestion and herd-suggestibility are often dangerous, and "authority" is then their unwitting ally in an evil cause.

The most virulent and objectionable use of religion as dope for others is made by many well-to-do people who support Christian Missions or social work in slum areas as an insurance against revolution, bloody or otherwise. They are not hypocrites, if by that we mean people who deliberately set out to care about promoting Christianity and then use it as a weapon with which to hit the poor below the belt. The word hypocrite, as a term of denunciation for those who deliberately deceive, is often unmerited; the people who deserve it in that sense are, mercifully, few.¹

In the sense in which, as I believe, Our Lord

¹ See also p. 49.

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used it we are probably all hypocrites. The hypocrite as we have noticed is the man who plays a part to himself, who has to "kid" himself first before he can "kid" anyone else. Hypocrisy is the lie in the soul. Psychologically it is to play tricks with one's mind, to think crookedly. One can do it by refusing to face all the facts and to look at the whole picture; in its earlier stages this may be wilful; soon it becomes a habit, an incapacity to recognize facts. Or one can set different sets of facts in separate mental compartments and dissociate them from one another, so that at last the mention of one set quite honestly provokes no sort of conscious remembrance of the other. This is most convenient.

Many people, who quite sincerely, as they think, believe and practise Christianity, practise it indeed most earnestly, have humbugged themselves in some sort of way in the matter under consideration. They fail to see that it is no longer possible to dope the working-classes as a whole with works of Christian patronage (which is a contradiction in terms), or with the promise of a happy hereafter to compensate for this life's worries or worse. It worked well enough in the nineteenth century, when it was the chief reaction of the Christian Church to the development of the industrial era, and the Church was probably then quite free from any sordid motive.

Such innocence is no longer credible. Some redistribution of wealth is now a political possibility. The traditional inviolability of "property" is threatened, and it is no use whatever any of us

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telling ourselves otherwise. That is the lie in the soul ; to pretend to oneself that selfishness and fear, however subtly disguised, may not, unless we take care, be entering into our own concern for the welfare of the masses.

The following composite paragraph has been put together from various remarks made to me by well-to-do Church people during the six years I have been working at Cambridge House in South London. "Do you find a great deal of discontent in your part of the world? I'm sure it's perfectly splendid to do work like that. I always say that we should do all we can to support such work. I've subscribed to ——— for years. They do so much for the people, you know. It's so distressing that there should be all this unrest. Russia, you know. How very terrible all that has been! Our Lord's example and teaching of patience was so wonderful, don't you think?" The implications of this speech are obvious.

It is not always easy to give what would be the Christian reply, and to give it in the spirit of Our Lord. It would be something like this: "I never encourage selfish discontent, but it is not right to condemn discontent when a man feels it on behalf of his neighbours. Even then I do nothing to fan it, because it is not my business. My business might be often, as you suggest, to use the Christian Gospel to bring hope and courage and patience to a man and family who were miserable in their own life. In the same way it would be our duty as ministers of Christ to preach patience to you if your income-tax were raised or luxury-trades died

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out or if you were called to abject poverty. But a Gospel of discontent is our business in one direction. We should like to make you so discontented with the waste and unhappiness caused by godlessness, lack of education, bad housing and all other social evils that you would devote your life and money not to comforting people for suffering these things, but to helping to remove them. We stand completely outside labour politics, but we must stand outside your politics too. The Gospel cannot be used either as a pretext for taking your property forcibly away or as a buffer to protect you from its loss."

One of the difficulties of the Church's work in industrial areas is the genuine suspicion that we are deliberately doing it in order to keep one section of the community "quiet" in the interests of another. Thus to those of us who are engaged in the work there is a real temptation to deceive ourselves in another way. In our anxiety to reflect to working-men the new and fairer attitude towards them on the part of the Church as a whole, we may forget the extremely unpleasant duty laid on us, of pointing out that which, from a Christian point of view, is wrong with themselves. For there is so much which with sincere humility we must admire in their lives and characters, often much more Christ-like than our own; their spirit of comradeship, the loftiness of their ideals, their single-minded devotion to political work in the attempt to raise the standard of life of those unable to help themselves.

Because of this (or so we think), some of us are

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inclined to shrink from pointing out to them as often and as courageously as we should, that which is unideal among them; their appeal sometimes to the worst instead of the best, to self-interest, to acquisitiveness naked and unashamed; their misrepresentation of those from whom they differ; their stimulation of class-antagonism. Many professional or leisured people with less excuse are equally guilty of exactly the same vices, and the Church is already less popular than it used to be in those quarters because it is more commonly and boldly rebuking them. It is time that some of us asked ourselves whether we fail in the same duty towards the "working-man" because at bottom we too are rather afraid of him and of his growing influence. Is the pendulum of the Church swinging with the pendulum of the world? It did little to rebuke the selfish indifference of those who piled up wealth when the industrial revolution turned masses of our fellow human-beings into mere "hands." It still rests under the accusation of being "on the side of Capitalism" as a result.

Times are changing. Is the Church veering too—ready to be on the winning side again in case Labour comes on top? That is the kind of question that we, the clergy, must ask ourselves; we who not only profess Christianity but dare to preach it or write books about it. Are some of us at heart unduly influenced by timid hankering after a new popularity? Have we the courage, come what may, to be loyal to our Lord without fear or favour to any class?

These are questions about which we may well

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pray : " Open Thou mine eyes ; Incline my heart ; Order my steps."

There are certain other sides of life to which considerations urged in this book may be applied. Reference has been made to beauty as an essential part of religion and so of life. If we agree in this we must also agree that much of the ugliness of the modern world is one of its most unchristian features. Even if we exalt beauty of character above all other beauty, and even if it can be shown, as is indeed true, that such beauty can flourish and develop in an overcrowded and insanitary home placed in the heart of an expanse of mean streets, we cannot be satisfied.

Beauty, or the lack of it in architecture and town-planning, good or bad colours, pictures or other decorations in the rooms in which we work or live, affect us for good or evil. Many a man brought up in one of our older public schools and at Oxford or Cambridge has thankfully admitted later in life that of which at the time he was barely conscious, the educative value of beauty in his surroundings, its permanent effect on taste and outlook.

It is probable that the power of ugly surroundings for evil is much less than the power for good of those that are beautiful or dignified, but the general effect is undoubted. The Church has done much in the past and might do much in the future to set a standard and to lead the way. Yet very often places of worship contradict, by their internal appearance, any notion that beauty has the remotest connection with religion. On the other hand,

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many a church-building in a slum area is, besides the cinema and the public-house, the only public building with light and colour and a beauty that does not belong to either of the other two. Even so the standard of ecclesiastical taste in such matters is not uniformly good. The flamboyant tinsel, the crude disharmony of colouring in some places of worship which affect to be bright spots in sordid surroundings represent an opportunity misused. That which does not pretend and has never tried to be beautiful, and sometimes by accident has a certain beauty of its own, probably does much less harm than something trying to be beautiful and not knowing how; the latter will never be beautiful even by accident.

It may be that the psychological effect on the mind of impressions taken by the eye from its surroundings has been thoroughly studied, but there remains much to be done in the study of the same effects in places of worship. This deserves more attention from the Church. We might also set a more intelligent example in the interior decoration of our clubs, parish-halls and other church-buildings. I am not aware that conventional dark brown, certain greens and terra-cotta are cheaper than other colours, but many of our church-buildings so bedight are monstrously depressing, and many of the religious pictures hung on the walls are an outrage. There is no earthly reason why a class-room should look "educational," or why a parish-hall should look obviously "philanthropic" or "institutional." In addition to setting an example, organized religion should put its influence

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behind any movement honestly designed to bring beauty into life as a whole, from folk-dancing or musical appreciation or town planning, to the interior decoration of workhouses, public libraries or prisons.

We now turn to a subject which has been deliberately kept in the background for reasons that have been given : "Spiritual Healing" or "Faith Healing." I believe that the power of God may be used through certain people called to this special work and acting in the name of the Church to effect the cure of physical sickness. I believe in the existence and efficacy of such power, as "supernatural" agency, capable of interrupting the course of what we call the "natural law" of cause and effect. But I believe that usually this divine power affects human life through known or discoverable laws and that psychology has a real contribution to make towards the development of Faith-Healing in the Church.

In this and a previous book certain preliminary stages have been laid down, such as correct moral or mental diagnosis of sin, self-examination, repentance, confession, forgiveness, which prepare the individual for the proper and effective work of healing faith within him. These preliminaries are claimed to be the divinely revealed conditions for the successful operation of divine power. I would add to these preliminaries a humble and genuine co-operation with the medical attendant of the sick person on the part of those who dare to try and exercise the gift of healing or urge others to put themselves within reach of that gift.

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It must be admitted, however, that cures achieved by some religious healers seem to show—(and it need not surprise us)—that God Himself is not tied down to the conditions laid upon us.¹ It is clear that in some Healing Missions they have been dispensed with. The truly pious, for instance, have failed to obtain relief when the worldly, who have made no special preparation, have been immediately benefited. In some instances the latter have realized and acknowledged a spiritual experience, approaching moral conversion, after rather than before the experience of physical healing.

Thus the more that is known on this subject the more clear it becomes that hasty generalizations are likely to be falsified. Much more careful study must be given, and given by people who are competent, if the whole movement is not to fall into discredit. The privilege of the laying-on of hands for the definite purpose of healing should be confined to those who have the gift of it and the call to it. The idea is not to be encouraged that the ministry of healing can be at present a normal part of the work of those who are called to the ministry of the Church, even if future generations of ordination candidates receive some instruction in psychology.

Indeed the clergyman who has made even a slight study of psychology becomes thereby aware

¹ It is for the medical profession, impartially trying to discover the truth, to say whether or not in such healing the line drawn between organic disease and functional disorder has been crossed. Faith-healing makes the claim.

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of his own ignorance and is less, and not more ready, to lay down the law in cases either of physical disease or of mental abnormality. He knows, better than the man who has read no psychology, whom of his flock he ought to direct to the right doctor instead of only exhorting to "come to church." And he will not always direct those in his spiritual charge to a psychotherapist. He recognizes not only the effect, for good or ill, of mind and spirit upon body, but also the reaction of body on mind. Ill-temper, sins of impurity, failure in concentration and other evils are rendered additionally difficult to conquer by reason of such a comparatively simple matter as a septic throat or bad teeth. We, the clergy, fail in right co-operation with the other great healing profession and in our duty to our people if it never occurs to us to ask any of those fighting some moral battle, "Look here. Are you quite fit physically?" or "When did you last see a dentist?" It is absurd that our concern for people's physical health, often intimately connected with their moral health, should stop short at the conventional desire that they should have fresh air and exercise or take what is called, suitably enough, a cold plunge.¹

The majority of us who have been called to the

¹ Only a doctor is competent to deal with the physiological side of this whole question. It seems at least possible that some ailments at present treated psychologically are due in part to chemical changes in the body or fall within the province of surgery. We can only hope that the pendulum between different schools of medical opinion may not oscillate too violently, and that the place and function of psychology in medicine may soon be a matter of more general agreement in the profession than it is at present.

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care and cure of souls need to concern ourselves most with so teaching the religion of our Lord that our people do not reach the point at which they need either doctor or faith-healer. It would be disastrous if we allowed ourselves to be distracted from this our larger duty of helping people to develop themselves positively to their best, and interested ourselves instead in sensational attempts at Faith-Healing, to which most of us are not called, and for which but few of us have the necessary gifts.

Twenty years or so before the close of the last century, a doctor who described himself as the second or third generation in his family to practise what even then was called "psychological medicine" did his best to draw the attention of the Church to the part religion should play in forestalling mental and nervous disease. He pointed out that Christianity rightly understood, taught and practised, would have made it impossible for many of his patients ever to have needed to consult him. A modern psychotherapist has said to me, almost in these words, "Not a few of my patients are not cases for a doctor at all. Certainly some of them have a religion and that is all they need. But they don't understand or apply it right, and it doesn't seem any use sending them to their parson. He generally can't help them to apply it any better."

This is quoted not necessarily as my own opinion. If it represents facts on a large scale, it is a charge from which we ought to escape. It is at any rate true that many people find in simple psychological teaching the help which they assert has not been

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forthcoming in the sermons they usually hear. And yet the sermons are preached by the missionaries of Him Who had the greatest knowledge of human nature, Who was in that sense the greatest psychologist that ever lived.

We need to be interested, not only in the ambulance or rescue work of the Church, but in its preventive work. Even that adjective implies a negation more than anything else. The "prevention" must be of the most positive kind, the motive of it being less to forestall evil than to promote good, and to promote it for its own sake. Yet the things that seem most usually these days to rouse the rank and file of the Church to energetic action are protests against something. Many laity who do nothing to ensure that their sons and daughters receive proper instruction in sex, especially in the details of how to live out the Christian sacrament of marriage, will rise as one man to protest against the iniquities of extended facilities for divorce. The positive duty they have omitted requires knowledge, thought and trouble. A protest requires less of the third of these and practically none of the first two. Denunciation is often only too fatally easy.

The problem before us in such a matter as this is not so much whether or not the State will make divorce still easier, but whether the Church by practical instruction as well as moral exhortation will help its members to find the joy and power which belong to sacramental union in Christian marriage. If Christians would put into such teaching the same energy and money for propa-

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ganda that they are ready to put into protests, the prevalence of divorces would be appreciably lessened.

Clergy and laity alike are alarmed, for the sake of the nation's well-being, at the widespread prevalence of betting and gambling. Here again it is temptingly easy to be merely "anti," to talk only about the danger and the evil of it. At least let us attempt the right remedy, and recognize that the soil in which the disease thrives and spreads is the condition of the people's life. Grim streets, overcrowded homes, the monotony of civilization's mechanical labour—of these horrors a shilling on a horse or a glass of beer are nearly the only mitigations available. If a maniac, gifted temporarily with omnipotence, desired to see bloody revolution in England, he would first put an entire stop to all betting and then close the breweries. Yet this is, of course, no sufficient reason why we should allow one of the greatest social evils of our times to rage unchecked.

The remedy lies only partly in the improvement of social conditions, for the vice belongs as much to the rich as to the poor. The human energy freed by shorter hours of work and better wages must be given a vent in openings for the happy expenditure of spare time and energy. The Church's part is to back any such movement and at the same time to exalt instead of seeming to condemn the spirit of adventure in human nature. This demands an outlet. People, consciously or unconsciously, seek romance in life, and religion must appeal to and satisfy the instinct of adventure. Yet to the outsider organized religion so often seems to stand

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corporately for "safety first," and to condemn the love of a risk. He can hardly be blamed if he fails, for instance, to understand that the Church of England is committed to a great adventure. He would say rather that it appeared above all else anxious not to make mistakes.

Divorce and gambling are just quoted as typical examples. The latter is an excellent illustration of the theory that sin lies in the misuse of that which in itself is perfectly right. Mere protests against misuse, mere negations are of no avail. Christians must preach and practise a more excellent way. We need to find a positive opposite to each thing that can be called a sin; that is to say, a real positive and not a neuter which is often little more than a negation. So in the affairs of the world at large the positive opposite of war is not peace, which in common speech signifies little more than the mere absence of an obvious row. The positive opposite of war is co-operation in love, joint action for good which shall develop the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The chief hope of the League of Nations, so ill supported on the whole by professing Christians in this country, lies in its insistence on the development of friendly co-operation in various lines of activity in times of peace. It should be impossible for any Christian to express disbelief in a positive ideal, yet the truth is commonly disregarded that faith and doubt work in the herd as they do in the individual; and a good or bad "suggestion" casually uttered will take root as easily in the collective mind as in the mind of the individual.

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Yet it is insufficient to concentrate upon the elimination of what seems the worst kind of war, that between nations. War is the explosive culmination of lesser wars, of the collective wrong choices of smaller groups or of individuals. In every case the same positive remedy must be employed. The positive opposite to an industrial dispute is not the "settlement" that temporarily concludes it, nor even the alleged peace that it is supposed to herald. We are so relieved at a settlement that we do not stop to scrutinize it, and are inclined to forget that peace will only be maintained if the same spirit of co-operation and mediation which (perhaps) brought about the settlement continues as an active force in the industry concerned. Even so something more positive must be the objective than co-operation to prevent a dispute. There must be co-operation between employers and men to make that industry an efficient act of service to the whole community. And we of the general public must repay that service in a greater sense of communal responsibility towards those, employers and employees alike, who render that service to us. So again the positive opposite of ill-temper is not just patience, but love in action; such love will of course include patience. The positive opposite of lust is not purity, as the word is generally used, or mere self-control, but self-discipline undertaken as the means to creative activity.

St. Paul illustrates a positive opposite,¹ useful as an example of the general principle, though not possible of universal application in times of severe

¹ Eph. iv.

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unemployment: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." In the twelfth chapter of the letter to the Romans will be found a host of positive opposites to evil. The writer gives the positive opposite to hate, including a redirection of the emotion we feel as passionate anger; the climax of the chapter may well be quoted: "Live peaceably with all men . . . give place unto wrath." That is the half-way house, the neutral. Then comes the positive: "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst give him drink." This brings him and ourselves to the conclusion of the whole matter: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

FOR FURTHER READING

The following books are recommended :—

- "Is Christian Experience an Illusion?" H. Balmforth. (S.C.M.)
- "An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion," R. H. Thouless. (Macmillan.)
- "Psychology and the Christian Life," T. W. Pym. (S.C.M.)
- "Christianity and Psychology," F. R. Barry. (S.C.M.)
- "The New Psychology and the Preacher," H. Crichton Miller, M.D. (Jarrolds.)
- "Psychology and Morals," J. A. Hadfield. (Methuen.)
- "The Theory and Practice of Auto-Suggestion," C. H. Brooks. (Allen & Unwin.)
- "Coué and his Gospel of Health," The Dean of Chester. (Simpkin, Marshall & Co.)
- "Christianity and Auto-Suggestion," C. H. Brooks and E. Charles. (Allen & Unwin.)
- "The Ministry of Healing," Report of the Archbishops' Committee. (S.P.C.K.)
- "St. Paul and Social Psychology," F. R. Barry. (Oxford University Press.)
- "After the War," The Bishop of Southwark. (S.P.C.K.)

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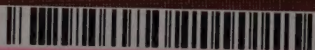
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